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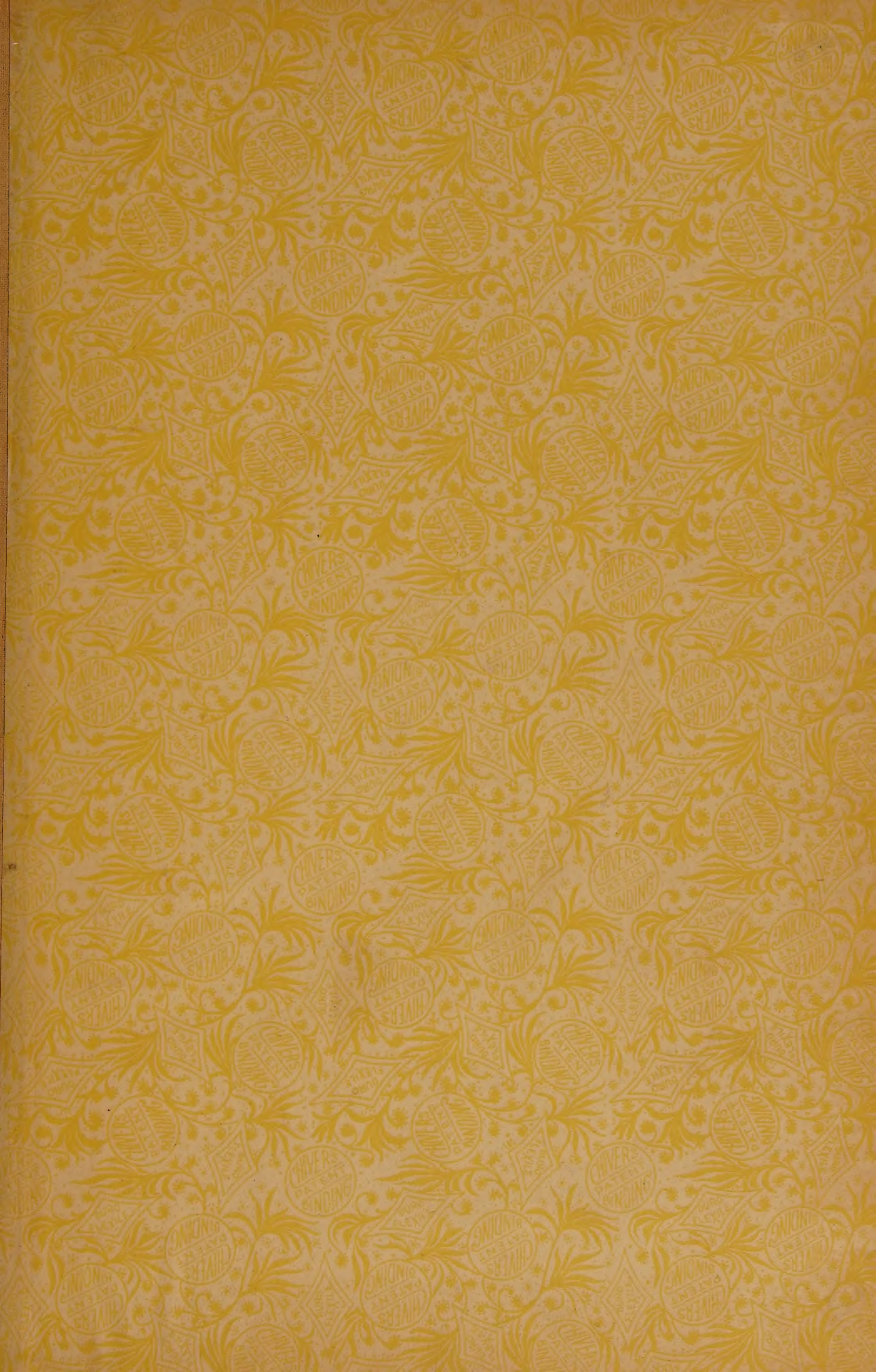
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FOUNDED BY
CHARLOTTE PORTER AND THE LATE HELEN A. CLARKE

MANAGING EDITOR, RUTH HILL

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ESTABLISHED 1889

THE OLDEST AND LARGEST REVIEW IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAG

DEVOTED TO POETRY AND DRAMA

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World Literature & the Drama

Spring Number

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By Alexander Ostrovsky

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Managing Editor—RUTH HILL

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FAIRY GOLD

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

Translated by Camilla Chapin Daniels and George Rapall Noyes

By Alexander Ostrovsky

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky (1823-86) is the great Russian dramatist of the central decades of the nineteenth century, of the years when the realistic school was all-powerful in Russian literature, of the period when Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy created a literature of prose fiction that has had no superior in the world's history. His work in the drama takes its place beside theirs in the novel. His plays still hold the stage in Russia, but are comparatively little known outside their own country.

Ostrovsky's range is extremely wide. "Fairy Gold" (1870) is a picture of the contrast between self-important, worthless representatives of the Russian gentry and a young man, who, honest and self-respecting, is making his way in the world by his business ability.

Characters

Sávva Gennádyevich Vasilkóv,[°] *a gentleman from the provinces, about thirty-five years old. He pronounces his o's in northern Russian fashion and uses turns of phrase belonging to the city-dwellers of the central Volga region. His provincialism is noticeable even in his manner of dress.*

Iván Petróvich Telyátev,[*] *a nobleman not in the government service, about forty years old.*

Grigóry Borísovich Kuchumov,[†] *about sixty years old, a dignified gentleman, retired, not of high rank in the service. He has many titled relatives on his mother's and his wife's sides of the family.*

Yegór Dmítriyevich Glumov.[‡]

Nadézhda Antónovna Cheboksárov, *an elderly lady with dignified manners.*

Lydia Yuryevná, *her daughter, twenty-four years old.*

ANDRÉY, *servant of the* CHEBOKSAROVS.
GRIGÓRY, TELYATEV'S *servant.*
NIKOLÁY, KUCHUMOV'S *servant.*
VASÍLY, VASILKOV'S *servant.*
A maid. A boy from the coffee house. Passers-by.

°Corn-flower
*Calfish
†Heaps of Money
‡Mocker

ACT I

(*Prologue*)

In the Petrovsky park, in the Saxe Garden. On the right is the park gate; on the left, a coffee house.

SCENE I

Pedestrians are coming and going; a few stop and read the notice on the gate. TELYATEV *and* VASILKOV *come out of the coffee house.*

Telyatev (*Chewing something*).—Yes, yes, yes! (*Aside*) How long will he keep it up?

Vasilkov.—I mean that she's a very pretty and a very attractive girl.

Telyatev.—There's news for you! What a discovery you've made! Who doesn't know that! (*He takes off his hat and bows.*) It's perfectly true. Lydia Yuryevna Cheboksarov's pretty—twice two is four. Don't you know some other undeniable truth?

Vasilkov.—I wanted to tell you that I've taken a great fancy to her.

Telyatev.—Better yet! But for heaven's sake, who doesn't like her! And why should I be interested even if you do like her? You must have come from a long way off.

Vasilkov.—Well, not so near. . . .

Telyatev.—You'd have given me a real surprise if you'd said that she liked you. That would be something really curious! But it's no wonder that you like her. I know of fifteen grown men who are madly in love with her, while if you take account of the school boys, there's no end of them. But I'll tell you something: Just you try to win her over.

Vasilkov.—Is it really so hard then?

Telyatev.—Well, just wait and I'll tell you.

Vasilkov.—But what's necessary? What kind of qualities?

Telyatev.—Such as neither you nor I have.

Vasilkov.—But what, please, for example?

Telyatev.—For example, half a million rubles or therebouts.

Vasilkov.—That's nothing.

Telyatev.—Nothing! Good heavens! Do you think millions grow up like mushrooms? Or perhaps you're a nephew of Rothschild? Then there's no use in our talking.

Vasilkov.—Neither one nor the other, but the times are such now that if you use your wits well . . .

Telyatev.—Yes, if you use your wits, and what's more, use them well. That means you must have them to begin with. But good sense is as rare with us now as millions of money. But let's stop talking about it, or else some one of our acquaintances will overhear and begin to laugh at us. Sensible people look after themselves and we look after ourselves. And so good sense counts for nothing. The deuce take it! Where can you get it if God didn't give it to you?

Vasilkov.—No, I shan't give up the hope of acquiring it so soon. But what else must you have in order to please her?

Telyatev.—A handsome officer's uniform and at least the rank of a colonel; and inborn good breeding, which simply can't be trained into a man.

Vasilkov.—This is all very strange. Is it possible that you can't conquer the heart of this girl by any other merits, by any qualities of mind and heart?

Telyatev.—But what can she know about your qualities of mind and heart? Will you write an astronomy and read it to her?

Vasilkov.—I'm sorry, very sorry, that she's so inaccessible.

Telyatev.—Why, what does it matter to you?

Vasilkov.—Come, I'll speak openly with you. I have a particular kind of business, and I need just such a wife, brilliant and with pleasing manners.

Telyatev.—Well, you don't ask for much, do you! Why, are you very wealthy?

Vasilkov.—Not yet.

Telyatev.—I suppose, then, you hope to become so.

Vasilkov.—At present . . .

Telyatev.—Why are you always talking about the present?

Vasilkov.—Because it's precisely at the present time that it's very possible for a man to become wealthy.

Telyatev.—That happens to whom God wills it. Those are still dreams of yours. But have you really something certain at the present time? Tell me, I won't rob you.

Vasilkov.—I'm sure you won't rob me. I have something certain, not risky at all: three country houses on my estate—about fifty thousand in all.

Telyatev.—Fifty thousand in cash is pretty good. In Moscow you can get credit on it up to a hundred, so there's a hundred and fifty thousand for you. One can live capitally on that amount for quite a while.

Vasilkov.—But you have to pay in the end though, don't you?

Telyatev.—Well, what do you care? Why should you worry so much about it? The idea of having too many thoughts in one's head! Leave that business to your creditors. Let them do the thinking and get their money when they can. Why should you meddle in some one else's business? Our business is to know how to borrow . . . . theirs is to know how to get their money back.

Vasilkov.—I don't know. I've never managed my affairs that way. My business is on quite a different basis and way of reckoning.

Telyatev.—You're still young. You'll come to our ways yet.

Vasilkov.—Perhaps so. But please introduce me to the Cheboksarovs. Although there's little chance that she'll like me, still a man never gives up hope, you know. I caught a glimpse of her a week ago, and since then I'm dreaming about her all the time. I've found out where they live and I've taken lodgings in the same house so that I can see her oftener. A business man ought to be ashamed of an infatuation, but what can I do? I'm still young when it comes to love. Introduce me, I beg of you.

Telyatev.—So be it, with pleasure.

Vasilkov (*Presses his hand tight*).—If I can be useful to you in any way . . . .

Telyatev.—A bottle of champagne—I won't take any other reward. Shall we have a bottle?

Vasilkov.—Of course! At any time and as much as you want. (*Presses* TELYATEV'S *hand tightly.*) I am truly grateful to you.

Telyatev.—Come, come, let my hand go. This is more than I can stand!

Vasilkov (*Looks around without dropping* TELYATEV'S *hand*).—Can it be they?

Telyatev.—It's they.

Vasilkov.—I'll go a little nearer and feast my eyes on them.

I'm really such a sentimental fellow I suppose it's amusing to you.

Telyatev.—But my hand . . .

Vasilkov.—I beg your pardon! I hope I'll find you here.

Telyatev.—Without fail.

(Vasilkov *goes away hurriedly.*—Glumov *enters.*)

Scene II

Telyatev *and* Glumov

Glumov.—Who was that crazy fellow talking with you?

Telyatev.—God sent him to me as a reward for my simplicity.

Glumov.—What do you make off of him?

Telyatev.—He gives me champagne.

Glumov.—Ah! That's not so bad!

Telyatev.—I'll look him over well. Yes, most likely I'll borrow some money from him.

Glumov.—That's still better . . . if he'll give it to you, of course.

Telyatev.—I think he will. I'm necessary to him.

Glumov.—Stop, if you please! To whom and for what can you be necessary?

Telyatev.—Just listen, then.

Glumov.—I'm listening.

Telyatev.—I saw him the first time about a week ago here in the park. I was strolling along that walk and I saw in the distance: a man was standing here with his mouth open, his eyes fairly bulging, his hat on the back of his head. Curiosity seized me . . . what was he so surprised over? There was no elephant out on parade, and no cock fight. I looked, and what do you think, who was he staring at so? Guess!

Glumov.—I don't know. What marvel can there be in this park?

Telyatev.—At Lydia Cheboksarov.

Glumov.—He hasn't bad taste.

Telyatev.—The Cheboksarovs' carriage stopped, the young men crowded about it, she and her mother were both conversing with some one . . . whom, I don't know. But he stood at a distance and fairly drank it all in with his eyes. The carriage started up, he threw himself after it, upset five people, and I caught it too. He began to excuse himself, and so we became acquainted.

Glumov.—I congratulate you.

Telyatev.—And today, just imagine, when he saw that I was talking with the Cheboksarovs, he fairly seized me by the collar, dragged me into the garden, ordered a bottle of champagne, then another. Well, we had a bit of a drink. And then lo and behold, he confessed to me that he was in love with Lydia Yuryevna and wanted to marry her. For you see, his business is such . . . but the devil himself doesn't know what his business is . . . that he needs just such a wife. Well, of course he asked me to introduce him.

Glumov.—Ah, he's an Ethiop! Here's some fun! He's come from Kamchatka or God know where, and right off he wants to marry our most marriageable girl. So his business is such that he simply must marry her! What simplicity! Everybody has a business of his own! Why, my affairs are such that I must marry a rich bride, only they won't give her to me. What kind of a bird is he? What does he do, anyway?

Telyatev.—Allah only knows.

Glumov.—Tell me how he talks and acts and I'll tell you in one word who he is.

Telyatev.—No, maybe you can't tell me in two words. He's a nobleman, but he talks like a sailor on a Volga steamer.

Glumov.—He's a ship-owner who has steamers on the Volga.

Telyatev.—When he started to pay for the wine, he took out a purse this big . . . (*He extends his hands.*) . . . a foot long, as sure as I'm alive! What didn't he have there! All kinds of stocks, accounts in different languages, greasy letters on grey paper written in peasants' handwriting.

Glumov.—But is he rich?

Telyatev.—Hardly. He says that he has a small estate, a forest worth fifty thousand or so.

Glumov.—That's not much. No, I'm wrong, he's not a ship-owner.

Telyatev.—He's either poor or else stingy. He paid for the wine, and right then, in my presence, he wrote it down in a little account book.

Glumov.—Could he be a clerk? What kind of fellow is he?

Telyatev.—As simple and naive as a schoolgirl.

Glumov.—Simple and naive. . . . He isn't a card-sharper, is he?

Telyatev.—That I can't tell you, but he drinks champagne in a way marvelous to see: carefully, methodically, just as if it were seltzer water. We drank it by the bottle, and he hardly flushed up or raised his voice.

Glumov.—Then he's surely a Siberian.

Telyatev.—He buys expensive cigars, speaks French excellently with only a slight accent.

Glumov.—Now I know. He's an agent of some London business house, and that's all there is to it.

Telyatev.—Explain him as you please. You've given yourself a problem to solve.

Glumov.—Well, whoever he is, we must have a little fun out of him. We haven't had a laugh for a long time. . . . Every one's sort of glum.

Telyatev.—Only in your comedy maybe the comic parts will fall to us.

Glumov.—No, we'll play the villain, at least I will. . . . And we'll begin this way: you introduce our eccentric to the Cheboksarovs and I'll tell Nadezhda Antonovna that he owns some gold mines, and we'll see how she'll begin to run after him.

Telyatev.—But when they find out that it's false, when it turns out that he only owns Chukhloma*?

Glumov.—What's that to us! We'll say that he told us so, that he's been bragging.

Telyatev.—But for what reason?

Glumov.—Why, are you sorry for him? What a calfish nature! Well, we'll say that we made a mistake, that he hasn't gold mines, but mines of red berries in his forests.

VASILKOV *approaches*

SCENE III

TELYATEV, GLUMOV *and* VASILKOV

Telyatev.—Have you finished looking at your beauty?

Vasilkov.—To my heart's content.

Telyatev.—Let me introduce you. Savva Gennadyevich Vasilkov, Yegor Dmitriyevich Glumov.

Vasilkov (*Presses* GLUMOV'S *hand tightly*).—Very glad to meet you.

Glumov.—But I'm not glad when you squeeze my hand so hard.

Vasilkov.—I beg your pardon, it's a custom in the provinces.

Glumov.—They call you "Savva." That's not the same as Savvaty, is it?

---

*A very remote, small village, about equivalent to "Podunk".

Vasilkov (*Very politely*).—No, it's different.

Glumov.—And it's not the same as Sebastian?

Vasilkov.—No, Sebastian means in Greek, worthy of honor; while Savva's an Arabian word.

Glumov.—And Savel?

Vasilkov.—Oh, do stop it! Take a calendar and look it up.

Telyatev.—So you know Greek?

Vasilkov.—I've studied it a little.

Glumov.—And Tartar?

Vasilkov.—I understand the simple speech, the dialect of Kazan, but I've just been in the Crimea, and there I had a hard time to make myself understood.

Glumov (*Aside*).—The devil alone knows what he is!

Telyatev.—Is it long since you were in the Crimea?

Vasilkov.—Ten days at the most. I was there on my way home from England.

Glumov (*Aside*).—How he lies!

Telyatev.—How did you happen to go to the Crimea from England?

Vasilkov.—I was interested in some earthworks and schemes of engineering construction on the Isthmus of Suez.

Glumov (*Aside*).—Perhaps he isn't lying after all. (*To* Vasilkov.) You came upon us just when we were talking about your choice to marry . . . . not a marred choice, but holy wedlock, according to our simple speech.

Vasilkov.—It's a good subject.

Glumov.—But you see, I myself want to pay court to Lydia Yuryevna Cheboksarov.

Vasilkov.—Judging from her beauty, there are probably many people who want to do the same thing.

Glumov.—But a lot of them are stupid fellows. They don't know themselves why they to get married. They like a girl because she's beautiful, and they only want to enjoy that beauty, that is, to bury it like so much dead capital. No, beauty's not dead capital. It should bring interest. Only a fool can marry Lydia Yuryevna Cheboksarov without ends in view. Either a card sharper should marry her, or a man who's making his way in the service. For the first, her beauty would be a bait for inexperienced young men; for the second, it would attract his superiors and win quick promotion.

Vasilkov.—I disagree.

Glumov.—There's a true and logical statement of it for you.

There's a view of life for you as it is now.

Vasilkov.—I disagree.

Glumov.—All this sour talk about virtue is stupid just because it's impractical. It's a practical age now.

Vasilkov.—Pardon me, I disagree.

Glumov.—All right, disagree!

Vasilkov.—There are honest ways of doing business even in our time. In a practical age it's not only better to be honest, but more profitable. It seems to me that you don't understand a practical age at all, and consider swindling a profitable speculation. On the contrary, when people are imaginative and full of lofty feelings, swindling has freer play and disguises itself more easily. It's much easier to deceive a girl with transcendental ideals or a poet who lives up beyond the clouds, to get the better of a romancing fellow, or fool a department chief who reads elegies, than it is to fool practical people. No, take my word for it, swindling is a bad business now.

Telyatev.—The Cheboksarovs are coming.

Vasilkov (Quickly seizing him by the hand).—Introduce me, I beg of you!

Telyatev.—Ouch! (*He draws his hand away.*) With the greatest pleasure. (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *and* LYDIA *approach.*)

SCENE IV

NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, LYDIA, VASILKOV, TELYATEV *and* GLUMOV

Telyatev (To NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA*).*—May I introduce you to a millionaire?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Oh, you clumsy fellow, it doesn't take much to make *you* lie.

Telyatev.—But see, I'll do it for nothing. I won't take interest for it.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—All right, then. But you're a good-for-nothing anyway. . . . One can't believe you.

Telyatev.—Before God, I swear! . . . Well, see then! . . . Savva Gennadyevich!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Wait a minute, wait a minute! What a name!

Telyatev.—Never mind, don't be afraid! They always give millionaires names like that. (VASILKOV *comes up to them.*)

I have the honor to introduce to you my friend, Savva Gennadyevich Vasilkov.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Very pleased to meet you.

Vasilkov.—I'm truly delighted. I'm not acquainted in Moscow.

Telyatev.—He's an excellent fellow; he speaks Greek. (*He goes over to* Lydia.)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Judging by your name, you were born in Greece?

Vasilkov.—No, in Russia, not far from the Volga.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Where do you live?

Vasilkov.—In the country, when I'm not traveling.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*To* Glumov).—Yegor Dmitryevich, find my servant for me! (Glumov *comes up.*)

Vasilkov.—Permit me to do so. I'll run at full speed. What is his name?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Andrey.

Vasilkov.—I'll find him this minute for you.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Tell him to give you my shawl. It's getting a little damp. (*She speaks to* Glumov *in a low voice;* Vasilkov *goes out.*)

Telyatev (*To* Lydia).—I've taken measures against the dampness.

Lydia.—I'm sorry: you're so kind, one might love you if you weren't so dissipated.

Telyatev.—I dissipated? You won't find a more virtuous person than I. I'll show you this minute.

Lydia.—Show me.

Telyatev.—Very well. I'll present my rival to you, who will annihilate me in your heart.

Lydia.—That wouldn't be hard at all. . . . it's much easier than you think. (Vasilkov *hurries up to* Nadezhda Antonovna *with the shawl,* Andrey *after him.*)

Vasilkov.—I've found him . . . here he is. (*He hands her the shawl.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, how you frightened me! (*She puts on the shawl.*) I thank you. Andrey, have the carriage wait at the theater.

Andrey.—Yes, madam. (*Goes out.*)

Telyatev (*To* Vasilkov).—Savva Gennadyevich!

Lydia.—What a name! Is he a foreigner?

Telyatev.—From Chukhloma.

Lydia.—What country's that? I don't know it. It's not in the geography.

Telyatev.—They've just recently discovered it. (VASILKOV *comes up.*) Let me present my friend, Savva Gennadyevich Vasilkov. (LYDIA *bows.*) He has been in London, in Constantinople, in Tetyushi and in Kazan; he says that he's seen pretty girls, but none so pretty as you.

Vasilkov.—Come, come, do stop! You embarrass me.

Lydia.—Do you know Madam Churilo-Plenkov in Kazan?

Vasilkov.—You bet I do!

Lydia.—They say she's separated from her husband.

Vasilkov.—Not on your life!

Lydia.—Do you know Mr. Crawlunderthegate?

Vasilkov.—He's my next neighbor. (LYDIA *looks over at* TELYATEV; *there is a brief silence.* VASILKOV, *in confusion, turns away.*)

Lydia.—What language does he speak?

Telyatev.—He was a prisoner for a long time among the people of Tashkent. (*They converse in a low voice.*)

Glumov (*To* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA).—He has mines of the very richest gold. From every forty pounds of sand they wash out a pound of gold.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Looks over at* VASILKOV).—Is it possible!

Glumov.—He said so himself. He lives all the time in the northern swamps with the Buryats. That's why he's such a wild fellow.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Looking graciously at* VASILKOV).—You don't say! From his appearance you'd never guess it.

Glumov.—How can you tell an owner of gold mines from his appearance? You can't dress him up in a gold overcoat. It's enough that all his pockets are stuffed with pure gold. He throws away money by the handful in tips.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What a pity that he squanders it so foolishly.

Glumov.—But he has no one to make him hold back. He's a single man. What he needs is a good wife, and especially, a clever mother-in-law.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Looks at* VASILKOV *very graciously*).—Why, he's not bad looking at all.

Glumov.—Yes, among the Esquimeaux he'd be even a beauty.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*To* LYDIA).—Let us go on, Lydia.

Gentlemen, I am out for a walk. The doctor has ordered me to take a walk every afternoon. Who wants to go with us?

Vasilkov.—If I may. . . . .

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Smiling pleasantly*).—Thank you, I shall be very glad. (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, LYDIA *and* VASILKOV *go out.*)

SCENE V

TELYATEV *and* GLUMOV

Glumov.—Well, the comedy's begun.

Telyatev.—Do you think so?

Glumov.—As if I'd let such a chance go by!

Telyatev.—Didn't she look at him sweetly though!

Glumov.—Let mamma and her daughter run after him while he melts with love. We'll raise them to ecstasies and then we'll disillusion them.

Telyatev.—Don't make a mistake. Mark my words, he'll marry Lydia Yuryevna Cheboksarov and take her away to Cheboksary! I'm afraid of him. He fairly casts a spell over a man. (KUCHUMOV *approaches.*)

SCENE VI

TELYATEV, GLUMOV *and* KUCHUMOV

Kuchumov (*From a distance*).—"*Ma in Ispania, ma in Ispania . . . . mille e tre . . . .* " (*He approaches proudly, with his head held high.*)

Telyatev.—How do you do, prince, old fellow!

Kuchumov.—What a fish pie I ate today, gentlemen . . . delicious, delicious! "*Mille e tre . . .* "

Glumov.—Have you been to a funeral or to an ice cream parlor?

Kuchumov.—What nonsense! "*Ma in Ispania . . .* " A certain merchant asked me in. I've done a lot for him already, and now he needed to have some concession or other. Well, I gave him my promise. It won't bother me.

Glumov.—Promising never bothers you.

Kuchumov.—What a malicious tongue you have, my dear fellow. (*Shakes his finger at him.*) Just wait a bit and they'l l drive you out of Moscow. Look sharp. I've only to say the word.

Glumov.—Yes, you'd have said it long ago if you could. Perhaps, God willing, I'll fall in with brighter people than you.

Kuchumov.—Come, come! (*Waving his hand.*) I won't talk with you.

Telyatev.—Well, if you won't talk, don't begin to. That's my rule.

Kuchumov.—"*Mille e tre* . . . . " Yes, yes, yes! I'd quite forgotten. Just fancy what happened: yesterday I won eleven thousand.

Telyatev.—Was it you, or some one else?

Glumov (*Excitedly*).—Where and how, tell me quickly!

Kuchumov.—In the Commercial Club.

Telyatev.—And did you get it?

Kuchumov.—I did.

Telyatev.—Tell us all about it!

Glumov.—If it's true, it's surely surprising.

Kuchumov (*Offended*).—It's not at all surprising. As if I couldn't win at cards. Yesterday I wandered into the Commercial Club, walked through the rooms a couple of times, looked over the menu and ordered them to prepare me some oysters.

Glumov.—Oysters at this season!

Kuchumov.—No . . . I forgot . . . it was meat dumplings. A certain gentleman came up to me . . .

Telyatev.—A stranger?

Kuchumov.—A stranger. He said, "Wouldn't your Excellency like a little game of baccarat?" "With pleasure, sir," said I. I had a lot of money with me; I thought I'd risk a thousand or so. We sat down, began with a ruble, and I had what you call a run of fool's luck. He changed the cards again and again; he saw things were going badly, so he called time. We began to reckon it up: twelve thousand five hundred; he took out the money.

Glumov.—You said eleven thousand.

Kuchumov.—I don't remember exactly. It was in that neighborhood.

Telyatev.—Who on earth is it that dares to lose twelve thousand in an evening? One must get acquainted with such people.

Kuchumov.—They say he's a newcomer.

Glumov.—Why, I was in the Commercial Club yesterday, and there was no talk at all about it.

Kuchumov.—I came very early: there was hardly any one there yet, and we finished our game in half an hour.

Glumov.—Supper's on you today.

Telyatev.—We're having supper with Vasilkov. But you come and treat us with a little cognac. It's grown quite damp.

Kuchumov.—Yes, I suppose you'll drink up a whole bottle. It comes dear by the glass.

Telyatev.—I'll take just one glass or two at the most.

Kuchumov.—If it's only two, all right. But at home on Sunday I'll give you something to eat for dinner. I'll give you a fresh sturgeon. They brought me a live one from Nizhni. Then some snipes, and such Burgundy that you . . .

Telyatev (*Takes him by the arm*).—Come along, come along! My teeth are beginning to chatter already from the dampness. We might catch a fever. (*They go out.* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, LYDIA, VASILKOV *and* ANDREY *come in.*)

SCENE VII

NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, LYDIA, VASILKOV *and* ANDREY

Nadezhda Antonovna (*To* ANDREY).—Order the carriage to draw up nearer.

Andrey.—Yes, madam. (*He goes out and returns soon.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna (*To* VASILKOV).—Thank you. It's time for us to go. Do come and see us.

Vasilkov.—When shall I come?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—As you please. I receive from two o'clock till four. But better still, just drop in without ceremony and have dinner with us. In the late afternoons we go riding.

Vasilkov.—I shall be happy to call on you at the first opportunity. Lydia Yuryevna, I'm a plain-spoken man, let me express all my astonishment at your incomparable beauty.

Lydia.—I thank you. (*She moves away, and, noticing that her mother is talking with* VASILKOV, *she shows impatience.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—So we'll expect you.

Vasilkov.—Without fail. Tomorrow I'll avail myself of your kind invitation. I don't live far from you.

Nadehzda Antonovna.—Indeed?

Vasilkov.—In the same house, only the other entrance. (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, *in departing, looks around several times.*

VASILKOV *stands still a long time with his head bare and looks after them.)*

SCENE VIII

VASILKOV, *alone*

Vasilkov.—How kind she is to me. It's wonderful. She must either have a very good heart, or else be very clever, to see my goodness through my rough bark of provincialism. But how fainthearted I am! That's what comes from studying pure and applied mathematics so long and constantly. Your heart grows tired of dry calculations, and then, when occasion turns up, it takes its revenge and makes a fool of a mathematician. And so my heart has revenged itself on me. I've suddenly fallen in love like a very boy, I've fallen so deeply in love that Lord knows what foolish thing I'll do. But there's this to be thankful for, that I have a firm will, and that, no matter how I'm swept off my feet, I won't run over my budget. No, Heaven forbid! More than once my strict adherence to a definite budget has saved me. *(He ponders.)* Oh, Lydia, Lydia, how my heart melts when I think of you! But supposing that you're heartless, that you love only money! . . . Yes, such a beautiful girl might easily win power over my childish soul. I feel that I'll be the plaything of a woman, her obedient slave. But still, it's good that I keep accounts closely and never run over my budget. (KUCHUMOV, TELYATEV *and* GLUMOV *come in.*)

SCENE IX

VASILKOV, KUCHUMOV, TELATEV *and* GLUMOV

Telyatev.—Well, how about it? Have you got acquainted? Do you feel better? I congratulate you. (*Kisses* VASILKOV.)

Vasilkov.—I'm greatly indebted to you, and believe me, I shan't forget it.

Telyatev.—If you forget it, I'll remind you. But now for that bottle of yours. Let's go and have supper and a drink or two. (*To* KUCHUMOV.) My dear prince, here's our new friend, Savva Gennadyevich Vasilkov.

Kuchumov.—Ah! Yes! Are you a newcomer?

Vasilkov.—I am, your Grace.

Telyatev.—No, he's not a Grace. He's just Grisha Kuchumov, but we call him that because we're so fond of him.

Kuchumov.—Yes! Our society's too exacting, too lofty. It's rather hard for a novice to get into it. One must have a great deal of . . .

Telyatev.—What rubbish he's talking!

Glumov.—If our society were more exacting, then you and I wouldn't get in.

Telyatev.—Shan't we drink a little something here for a send-off?

Vasilkov.—If the company wishes it. Waiter, bring us a bottle of champagne.

Glumov.—And four big glasses.

Kuchumov.—All right, four. I'll do you the honor of having a little drink with you.

Glumov.—From here we'll go straight to the club. We'll just make a table. (*To* Kuchumov.) We'll count over the twelve thousand you won yesterday.

Kuchumov.—Don't add your own to it.

Telyatev (*To a servant who is standing by the gate.*) Grishka! Grigory Alekseich! (Grigory *comes up.*) Grigory Alekseich, help me on with my coat. Is my carriage near?

Grigory (*Helping him on with the coat*).—Here, sir, by the gate.

Kuchumov (*To his lackey*).—Nikolay! (Nikolay *comes up.*) Come, why are you standing with your mouth open? Stand here. Help me into the carriage. (*A boy from the coffee house brings out champagne and glasses.*)

Vasilkov.—Allow me, gentlemen, I beg of you. (*They all take glasses.*)

Telyatev.—To your success, though it's very unlikely!

Glumov.—To the trouble ahead of you, but there'll be no success!

Kuchumov.—What success?

Glumov.—He wants to marry Lydia Cheboksarov.

Kuchumov.—How is it possible? Anyhow, I won't permit it.

Telyatev.—They won't ask your permission.

Vasilkov.—Do you want to bet three thousand on it? I'll bet alone against the three of you that I'll marry Lydia Cheboksarov.

Kuchumov.—I never bet.

Glumov.—I'd take it up, but I haven't any money.

Telyatev.—And I'm afraid to lose.

Vasilkov.—Ha, ha, ha! Moscow gentlemen! You've lost heart? Yet what's there to laugh at? Shall we have a square deal? Here are the three thousand. (*He takes out the money; they all shake their heads.*) The wine has unloosened my tongue. I've fallen in love with Lydia Cheboksarov, and sure as fate I'll marry her. What I have said will come true. . . . I don't speak words for nothing. Come, let's have supper.

ACT II

A richly furnished drawing room, with pictures, rugs and draperies. Three doors: one on each side and one from the hall.

SCENE I

VASILKOV *walks to and fro.* TELYATEV *comes in from the door on the left.*

Telyatev.—I thought that you had left long ago. Why don't you go in and see the ladies. Are you timid?

Vasilkov.—It's my ill-fortune that I don't know how to hold up my end of a conversation.

Telyatev.—As if that were hard! All you have to do is not to start learned arguments, especially after dinner. Say whatever comes into your head so long as it's jolly, or witty, or slightly malicious. But you keep discoursing about truncated pyramids and cubic feet.

Vasilkov.—I've just now been thinking of a funny anecdote that I want to tell them.

Telyatev.—Then hurry up before you forget it.

Vasilkov.—But where are you rushing off to?

Telyatev.—Lydia Yuryevna sent me out for a bouquet.

Vasilkov.—Everything shows me that you're my most dangerous rival.

Telyatev.—Don't be afraid, old fellow! A man who hasn't let one ballet go by in twenty years wouldn't do for a husband. Don't worry about me, but go in boldly and tell them your anecdote. (VASILKOV *goes out through the door on the left;* GLUMOV *comes in by it.*)

SCENE II

TELYATEV *and* GLUMOV

Glumov.—Is he still here? What a goose! No, I see that it's time to drive him out. They've amused themselves long enough with him. I'm sorry that we didn't take up his bet.

Telyatev.—I wouldn't do it even now.

Glumov.—Yet he outwitted us cleverly then in the Commercial Club. Kuchumov's a fine fellow. He said that he won twelve thousand the evening before, but then he couldn't pay up six hundred. He saw the man for the first time and fell into his debt. Where are you going?

Telyatev.—To Petrovka.

Glumov.—Let's go together. (*They go out.* Kuchumov *and* Nadezhda Antonovna *come in.*)

Scene III

Kuchumov *and* Nadezhda Antonovna

Kuchumov.—"*Muta d'aciento e di pensier* . . . "

Nadezhda Antonovna.—For some time I've been receiving only this kind of news.

Kuchumov.—Hm . . . yes . . . it's unpleasant! "*E de pensier* . . . "

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Every day I keep hearing some report of that sort.

Kuchumov.—But what is that husband of yours doing there? How do you put up with it so? I don't understand. He's one of our sort . . . a man of sense.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But what can he do? You've read, haven't you, what he writes? A bad harvest, a drought, the forests about the factory have been burned and every year the factory loses money. He writes that he absolutely must have thirty thousand, that the estate has already been put up for sale.

Kuchumov.—What's the matter with him, the crazy fellow! Hasn't he a lot of friends? Take me, for instance. You write him to apply straight to me. "*Muta d'aciento* . . . "

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, my friend, I have always had confidence in you.

Kuchumov.—That's a great favor, to be sure. For old acquaintance's sake, I'm glad. . . . It's a small matter.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Grigory Borisovich, but . . . for God's sake! . . . Only with you do I speak openly. Before others we must appear prosperous. I have a daughter twenty-four years old. . . . Think, Grigory Borisovich.

Kuchumov.—Of course, of course.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—We must keep up a little longer. We still have credit—a little. Winter will be here soon: theaters, balls, concerts. Mothers alone know what it costs. My Lydia won't listen to me. She must have what she wants. She doesn't know the value of money, nor how far it will go. She visits the shops and buys things without asking the price. Then I have to pay the bills afterwards.

Kuchumov.—But is there no good match in view?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—She's hard to please.

Kuchumov.—In former days some one would have carried her off long ago, a girl like that. Why, if I didn't have an old woman at home . . .

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You can have your jokes, but how does it seem to me, a mother! So many years of happy life, and then suddenly . . . Last winter I took her out everywhere. I spared nothing for her, I spent everything that had been laid aside for her dowry—and all for nothing. And now, here I was expecting money from my husband, and suddenly this letter arrives. I haven't the faintest idea what we're going to live on. How shall I tell Lydia? It will kill her.

Kuchumov.—But please, if you need anything, don't stand on ceremony. . . . Do let me take the place of Lydia's father while he's gone. I've known her since she was a little girl and I love her, believe me, more than a daughter. I love her . . . yes! . . .

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I don't know how much you love her, but there's no sacrifice that I wouldn't make for her.

Kuchumov.—And I too, I too. What is that Vasilkov hanging around here for? You must be more discriminating.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But why shouldn't he come here?

Kuchumov.—He's a disagreeable fellow. No one knows who he is or where he comes from.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Neither do I. I know that he's a nobleman, that he conducts himself most properly.

Kuchumov.—Yes, and what else?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—He speaks French well.

Kuchumov.—Yes, but that's small credit to him.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—They say that he has important business enterprises.

Kuchumov.—They *say* so. You don't know much about him.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—He appears intelligent.

Kuchumov.—Let me be the judge of that. How did he happen to meet you?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Really . . . I don't remember. Some one introduced him . . . Telyatev, I think. Everybody comes to see us.

Kuchumov.—Doesn't he think of marrying Lydia?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Who knows? Perhaps so.

Kuchumov.—But has he property?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I confess that I've thought so little about him that I haven't interested myself in his property.

Kuchumov.—He's always saying, "At present . . . at present."

Nadezhda Antonovna.—All people talk that way now.

Kuchumov.—Yes, but all the same one grows tired of it. Speak when people want to hear you. And how about this present time? Is it better than the old days? Where are the mansions of princes, and counts? To whom do they belong now? To the Petrovs and the Ivanovs. Where are the hunting parties, with their music on the horns, I ask you? Ah, in the old times at sunset, by the little lakes! . . . And then fireworks, while the ambassadors looked on! . . . That, that was the glory of Russia. Such people ought to be driven out.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But why? On the contrary, I want to be friendly to him. In our position all kinds of people may be useful.

Kuchumov.—Well, this one will hardly serve a purpose. You'd better rely on us old fellows. Of course I can't marry. I've got a wife. Oh, oh, oh, oh! You see, old men have their dreams, then suddenly they are ready to do anything. I'm an old solitary, with no children. Make use of me as you please, as a godfather or to give away the bride. Kindness is dearer than any thing else to an old man. I can't take my hundreds of thousands to the grave with me. Good-bye! I must go to the club.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Accompanying him to the door*).—May we hope to see you soon?

Kuchumov.—Yes, of course. I still owe your daughter some bonbons on a wager. Here I'm an old man, but the young blood still speaks in me. (*He goes out.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, it's not bonbons we need! (*She stands pondering.* VASILKOV *comes out and picks up his hat.*)

Scene IV

Nadezhda Antonovna *and* Vasilkov

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Where are you hurrying off to?

Vasilkov.—I have the honor to bid you farewell.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Wait a minute. (*She sits down on the divan.*)

Vasilkov.—What is it?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Come sit with me a moment. (Vasilkov *sits down.*) I want to have a little talk with you. We've been acquainted a long time, but I don't know you at all! We've hardly conversed together. It must be that you don't like old women.

Vasilkov.—You are much mistaken. But what would you like to know about me, madam?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I must at least know enough about you so that I may be able to answer when people ask me questions; many people visit us here, but no one knows you.

Vasilkov.—That's because I've been living in the provinces.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Where were you educated?

Vasilkov.—At the university, but I devoted myself mostly to my specialty.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—That's splendid! Are your parents still living?

Vasilkov.—Only my mother, but she never leaves her own village.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—So, you're practically alone. Are you in the government service?

Vasilkov.—No, I'm interested in private enterprises. I do business mostly with the common people, with contractors and with tithing men.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Condescendingly nodding her head*).—Yes . . . with tithing men, hundred men, thousand men. . . . I've heard a dissertation . . .

Vasilkov.—No, we have only tithing men.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, that's fine! Yes, yes, yes, I remember. That's come into style now. . . . And a few, even rich people . . . in order to be nearer to the peasantry. . . . Well of course . . . You wear a red silk—I mean a velvet overcoat. Once I a saw a millionaire, on the train, in winter time, in just a plain sheepskin. . . . What do they call it?

Vasilkov.—Short coat.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, in a short coat and a beaver cap.

Vasilkov.—No, I wear the same things right along.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But surely one must have money in order to spend one's time so.

Vasilkov.—In the first place, it's a very profitable business.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I suppose you mean pleasant. They sing songs and dance. I suppose you have your own men to row your boats.

Vasilkov.—Nothing like it. But you're right on one point: one must have property in order to make a start in our business.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Of course, I thought so. It was plain to me from the very first that you were a man of means. You don't seem quite in good spirits today. (*A pause.*) Why do you argue with Lydia? It makes her angry. She has a mind of her own.

Vasilkov.—If she has, it's a good thing; independence in a woman is a great virtue. But it's a pity that Lydia Yuryevna understands so little about matters that every one knows about now.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But tell me, my friend, why should she understand matters that every one else knows about? She's been more highly educated. We have a splendid French library. Ask her something about mythology, just ask her! Be assured, she's well acquainted with French literature and knows things that other girls haven't dreamed of. The very cleverest society wit can't talk her down or startle her.

Vasilkov.—Such a defensive education would serve her well with another man. Of course I haven't the right to instruct any one if they don't ask me. I wouldn't have tried to convince Lydia Yuryevna if . . .

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, "if"?

Vasilkov.—If I hadn't hoped to do her some good. With a change of convictions, her attitude towards people would become different, and she'd pay more attention to real worth of character.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, to real worth of character! . . . How truly you speak!

Vasilkov.—Because then I might hope to win her good favor. But now, I can't be agreeable, and I don't want to be ridiculous.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What are you saying! She's still so young, she'll change her mind a dozen times yet. But I confess I've always enjoyed listening to you, and when you weren't here, I've often repeated your words to my daughter.

Vasilkov.—Thank you. I was on the point of retreating, to avoid playing a pitiable part here.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Oh, oh! . . . shame on you!

Vasilkov.—You see, I have no particular reason to humiliate myself. I don't seek other people, I'm sought by them.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Young man, you will find in me an ally ready to help you in all your undertakings. (*Mysteriously*) Listen. In *all;* because I find them honorable and absolutely noble. (LYDIA *enters and stops at the door.*)

Vasilkov (*Rises and kisses* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA'S *hand*).—Good-bye, Nadezhda Antonovna.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Good-bye, my good friend. (VASILKOV *bows to* LYDIA *and goes out.*)

SCENE V

NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *and* LYDIA

Lydia.—What were you talking with him about? What? He's terrible, he's crazy.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Believe me, I know what I'm doing. In our position we can't be too discriminating.

Lydia.—Our position! He's unbearable, no matter what position you're in. He doesn't know our life, our necessities—he belongs to another class entirely.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, but he often tells the truth.

Lydia.—But who gave him the right to preach? What kind of a prophet is he? Do admit, mamma, that our drawing room isn't an auditorium, or a technical institute, or an engineering corps.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Lydia, you're very cruel to him.

Lydia.—Ah, mamma, but how can one have the patience to listen to him? What economic laws hasn't he made up! Who wants to hear of 'em? I hope that the only laws for you and me are those of society and etiquette. If every one dressed in a certain style, then I'd do it too, even if I died for it. There's no time for us to think about laws . . . you just have to go to the store and buy things. No, he's absolutely crazy!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—It seems to me that he simply has an original way of talking. Many do the same. He's not very well educated, and perhaps he's not clever either—or distinguished for his wit—but he *must* say something, in order to be noticed, and so he wants to appear eccentric. But probably he thinks and acts just like all decent people.

Lydia.—Perhaps he does, but he's impossible, he bores me so.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—He's a man of wealth. We must be more indulgent to such people. We forgive the others, don't we? And yet half of the gentlemen who come to see us boast and lie terribly.

Lydia.—What's it to me if they lie? At least it's jolly with them, but he's a bore! . . . That's what I can't forgive.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—My dear, there is still another reason why you should be kinder to him, and I advise you . . .

Lydia.—What reason? Tell me!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You're a sensible girl. I hope that you will have enough presence of mind to listen calmly to what I have to tell you. . . .

Lydia (*Frightened*).—What is it? What is it?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I've received a letter from your father from the country.

Lydia.—He's sick, he's dying?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—No.

Lydia.—What is it then? Tell me!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Our hopes for this season are ruined.

Lydia.—How? I don't understand.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I wrote to his country address to send us some money. We owe a great deal and we need a very considerable sum for this winter. Today I received the answer.

Lydia.—What does he write?

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Sniffing her smelling salts*).—He writes that he has no money, that he must have thirty thousand himself or else the estate will be sold—and that's our last estate.

Lydia.—It's a pity! But don't you think, mamma, that I might have been kept in ignorance of this, that you might have spared me and not told me about your financial troubles?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But all the same, you'd have found out afterwards.

Lydia.—But why should I find out about it afterwards? (*Almost in tears.*) You'll find some way out of this position, won't you? You *must!* We can't let things rest as they are. We surely shan't leave Moscow and go to the country; and we can't live in Moscow like beggars. One way or another, you must manage so that no change will be made in our way of living. This winter I must marry and make a good match. You're my mother, aren't you? Don't you know that? And can it be that you won't devise some way, if you haven't already, to live through the winter without lowering our dignity? You must think of one—you *must!* Why did you tell me this when I didn't need to know it? You rob me of my calmness, of my happy, carefree ways, the lovliest ornament a girl can have. You ought to have done your thinking alone, mamma, and cried alone, if you had to cry. Will it be any easier for you if I cry with you? Tell me, mamma, will it be any easier?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Of course it won't.

Lydia.—Well, why, *why* then, should I cry? Why do you lay this anxiety upon me? Anxiety ages you, it makes wrinkles on your face. I feel that I've grown ten years older already. I didn't know, I didn't feel the lack of anything and I don't want to feel it. I know that there are stores for linen, for silk, for carpets, for furs, for furniture. I know that when people want something, they go there and take things and give them money in return, and if there's no money, they tell the clerk to call for it. But where to get the money from, and how much one must have to last through a year, a winter,—I never knew and I didn't think it was necessary to know. I never knew what expensive or cheap meant—I always considered all that a pitiable, bourgeois, petty kind of reckoning. I drove away such thoughts from me with a shudder of disgust. I remember one time when I was coming home from a store the thought occurred to me, hadn't I paid too much for my dress? And I was so ashamed of myself that I blushed all over and didn't know where to hide my face, and yet I was alone in the carriage. I remembered that I had seen a merchant's wife in the store who was bargaining for a piece of goods: she was sorry to pay so much for it, and sorry to let it out of her hands. She would hold it up for a moment and lay it down again, then she'd pick it up again and whisper a bit with two old women, and then she'd lay it down again, while the clerks laughed at her. Oh, mamma, why do you torture me!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I know, my darling, I should have kept the news of our ruin from you, but it was impossible. If we stay in Moscow, we shall be forced to reduce our expenses. We must sell our silver, a few pictures and diamonds.

Lydia.—Oh no, no! For heaven's sake! We can't, we can't! All Moscow will know that we're ruined. People will come to us with sour faces, with pretended sympathy, with stupid advice. They'll shake their heads and sigh, and all so artificially, so conventionally, so insultingly! Indeed, no one will give himself the trouble to put up even a good pretense. (*She covers her face with her hands.*) No, no!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But what can we do?

Lydia.—Do? Keep up our dignity: have the house redecorated, buy a new carriage, order new liveries for the servants, get new furniture, and the more expensive, the better.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But where is the money for it all?

Lydia.—He will pay for everything.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Who is "he"?

Lydia.—My husband.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Who is your husband? Where is he?

Lydia.—Whoever he may be . . .

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Has some one made you an offer?

Lydia.—No one, no one has dared to make me one. My suitors have never seen me show anything except contempt for them. I have been looking for a handsome man with a fortune. Now, all I need is a wealthy man, and there are a lot of them.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Don't make a mistake in your reckoning.

Lydia.—Can my beauty have lost its value? No, mamma, don't you worry. There are few beautiful women, but there are a lot of rich fools. (ANDREY *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Telyatev.

Lydia.—There's the first one for you.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*To* ANDREY).—Ask him in! (ANDREY *goes out.*)

Lydia.—Leave us, don't interfere. He'll pay for everything.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But if . . . ?

Lydia.—But if . . . ? Well, what of that? You say that Vasilkov has a fortune, then send for him. He has gold mines, he's stupid. . . . The gold is ours.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Going out*).—I'd better send for him now and prepare him. (*She goes out.* TELYATEV *comes in with a bouquet.*)

SCENE VI

TELYATEV *and* LYDIA

Lydia.—How clever you are, how you spoil me! Tell me, how do you do it?

Telyatev.—Can that be anything new to you? When did I ever fail to perform your commands?

Lydia.—Why do you always spoil me?

Telyatev.—I was simply made to wait on people. It's my vocation. What should I do? I haven't any other business.

Lydia.—I suppose it's a recreation from boredom. Yet you make me dizzy with your attentions.

Telyatev.—I'm sorry.

Lydia.—It's nothing to be sorry for . . . or else it's a great sin, depending on whether your actions are sincere or not.

Telyatev.—Of course they're sincere.

Lydia.—But your constant attentions, your constant flattery . . . they're all a kind of little fish hook on which you catch us. You make us imagine such devotion in you that we can't be indifferent.

Telyatev.—So much the better. We won't be the only ones who lose our self-possession. It's high time that your emotions awoke.

Lydia.—Yes, it's well enough for you to talk, when every emotion you ever had has been reduced to a phrase long ago. You've had so much practice all your life in this art that you can command yourself in any position. But imagine to yourself an inexperienced girl whose emotions awaken for the first time . . . her position is very difficult and dangerous.

Telyatev.—It's quite possible . . . I can't tell myself; I never was a girl.

Lydia.—If I express my emotions just once, I'll either become a man's plaything or I'll be ridiculous, and one's as bad as the other. That's bad, isn't it?

Telyatev.—Yes, you're right.

Lydia.—So don't turn my head for nothing. Be more sincere, I beg of you! Don't say what you don't feel; don't flirt with me if you don't like me.

Telyatev.—Who told you that? By no means! I always say what I feel.

Lydia.—Really?

Telyatev.—I even say less than I feel.

Lydia.—Why is that?

Telyatev.—I don't dare to—would you really let me?

Lydia.—Please do.

Telyatev.—I can't believe my ears. Am I not dreaming? What a happy day for me! What date is it?

Lydia.—Why is it a happy day?

Telyatev.—Who would have expected it! You are kind to me, you come down to earth to me from your unapproachable height. You were a Diana, scorning all men, with the moon in your hair, with a quiver at your shoulders; but now you're transformed into a simple, cordial, even an artless peasant girl, like those who dance in ballets and finger their aprons—like this . . . (*He makes typical peasant gestures.*)

Lydia.—Does that really make you happy?

Telyatev.—I'm not the Bronze Rider or the Stone Guest,* am I?

Lydia.—How easy it is to make you happy! Well, I'm very glad if I can.

Telyatev.—Make me happy? Lydia Yuryevna, did you say that, did you?

Lydia.—Why are you surprised? Don't you deserve to be happy?

Telyatev.—I don't know whether I do or not, but I know I'm losing my head.

Lydia.—Lose it!

Telyatev.—I shall do all kinds of foolish things.

Lydia.—Do them!

Telyatev.—Either you're making fun of me, or you . . .

Lydia.—Go on!

Telyatev.—Or else you love me!

Lydia.—Unfortunately that's nearer the truth.

Telyatev.—Unfortunately? That's joy, bliss! Nothing could be better. (*Gently embraces* LYDIA.)

Lydia.—Jean, are you mine?

Telyatev.—Your slave, your African slave, your Abyssinian!

Lydia (*Raising her eyes to his*).—For a long time?

Telyatev.—Forever, all our lives, even longer if that's possible.

Lydia.—Ah, how happy I am!

Telyatev.—No, how happy *I* am! (*Kisses her.*)

Lydia.—Ah, kind Heaven, what bliss! Mamma!

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* References to poems by Pushkin.

Telyatev.—Why do you call mamma? Why should she be here? We don't need a third.

Lydia.—I know, Jean, that it's not necessary, but I'm so happy!

Telyatev.—So much the better.

Lydia.—My soul is so full, I want to share my joy with her.

Telyatev.—You mustn't share it on any account! We'll have just so much the more.

Lydia.—Yes, yes, you're right, we mustn't share our joy; there's so little of it in the world. But still we must tell her, mustn't we?

Telyatev.—I don't understand yet. Tell her what?

Lydia.—Why this, Jean, that we love each other and want to be joined together for all our lives.

Telyatev.—So that's it! That is, in due form, as is proper in legal marriage? No, excuse me, I didn't expect that.

Lydia.—What are you saying? What *did* you expect, then? Tell me!

Telyatev.—To be your servant, your slave, whatever you pleased. But as for marriage—that's none of my business.

Lydia.—How did you dare?

Telyatev.—I didn't dare anything. I just didn't forbid your loving me; and I shan't forbid any one.

Lydia.—But are you worthy of my love, then?

Telyatev.—It's perfectly true that I'm not worthy of it. But do people love only those who are worthy of love? What a fool I'd have been if I'd begun to refuse your love and read you a lecture on morals! Excuse me, I couldn't teach you morals, no matter how I tried. They're quite beyond me, I don't pay any attention to them; and to my mind, the less moral a woman is, the better.

Lydia.—You're a monster! You're disgusting!

Telyatev.—It's perfectly true, and so you ought to thank me yourself that I didn't marry you. (Lydia *goes out.*) That's where I almost got caught! I'm lucky to have come through safe. No, you must give up these playthings or else you'll play too long, and you won't see how they're roping you in for a husband. Sin comes easy, man is weak. (*He goes to the door.* Vasilkov *comes in.*) I do you the honor of yielding my position. (*He goes out.* Nadezhda Antonovna *comes in.*)

SCENE VII

NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *and* VASILKOV

Nadezhda Antonovna.—How do you do! I'm very glad to see you. You can see how indispensible your society has become to me. Sit down here, a little nearer to me.

Vasilkov.—You sent for me?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Pardon me for disturbing you. I need advice. I'm an utterly helpless creature and I know only one sensible man—yourself.

Vasilkov.—Thank you. How may I serve you?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I've been talking with my daughter: we want to change our mode of living, we're tired of this noisy society. We shan't receive any one except you. Although we have a very large income, we don't have to keep rushing madly around from morning till night.

Vasilkov.—I suppose not.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Lydia wants to complete her education. One can't proceed in such a matter without direction. And so we have decided to turn to you.

Vasilkov.—With all my heart! I'm glad to help you. But what can I teach Lydia Yuryevna? Spherical trigonometry?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah yes, of course, of course. Come now, it's rather pleasant to be a young girl's teacher, isn't it?

Vasilkov.—Certainly. But why does Lydia Yuryevna want to learn spherical trigonometry?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—She's a very strange girl, generally speaking, but good—oh, so good! (*Mysteriously*). You see, she doesn't like these society dandies.

Vasilkov.—I'm surprised.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—As for me, I've not liked them for a long time. But now, to you any mother could trust her daughter without misgivings. Forgive me, my friend, for my plain-speaking, but I wish very much that Lydia should like you.

Vasilkov.—I thank you.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—It seems to me, if it were possible, that I'd even employ authority in order to see her happy.

Vasilkov.—Isn't there any other way?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I don't know, see if you can find out. But do you love my daughter? Wait, let me look into your eyes. No, don't speak; I see. Only you're very timid, aren't you? Do you want me to tell her for you? Or else you may begin to dispute and finish with a quarrel. . . . God forbid!

Vasilkov.—No, let me speak for myself. I must think a little, prepare myself for a declaration.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Think about what, prepare for what? (Lydia *comes in.*)

Scene VIII

Vasilkov, Nadezhda Antonovna *and* Lydia

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Lyda, Savva Gennadiyevich is making you an offer through me: he asks for your hand. Although on my part, I'd gladly consent, still I don't want to coerce you.

Lydia.—In such a matter, of course, I must follow my choice; and if I liked some one, believe me, mamma, I would sooner obey my own heart than your advice. But I'm equally indifferent to all of my suitors. You know how many of them I've already refused, but I must get married—it's time I did—and so I put myself at your full disposal.

Vasilkov.—That means, you don't love me?

Lydia.—No, I do not. Why should I deceive you? But we'll come to an understanding later. Mamma, you're taking my fate in your hands: remember that you must answer for my happiness too.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*To Vasilkov*).—Do you hear, my friend?

Vasilkov.—I'm very sorry.

Lydia.—Very? Because I don't love you?

Vasilkov.—No, because I hurried.

Lydia.—Refuse me, there is still time. Of course, your own love can't be very deep if you give me up so easily. Don't be angry, but thank me that I speak openly to you. It would be easy to pretend, but I don't want to. All girls say that they're in love with their sweethearts, but don't you believe them . . . the love comes afterwards. Put your vanity aside and agree with me! Why should I love you? Your face isn't the most handsome, your first name is unheard-of, your last name seems of humble origin. These are all trifles that one can get accustomed to, but not all at once. Why are you angry? You love me. I thank you. Earn my love, and we shall be happy.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—And first of all, remember that neither her father nor I have ever spared anything for her. Whatever you do for her, she'll still be making a sacrifice.

Vasilkov.—I don't want a sacrifice.

Lydia.—I don't think you know yourself what you want.

Vasilkov.—No, I know what I want. One can marry without love. Love will come in time of its own accord; you are right. But I wish you to respect me. Without that, marriage is quite impossible.

Lydia.—Of course! Otherwise I wouldn't marry you.

Vasilkov.—Let me be frank in return for your frankness. You have told me that you do not love me, but I tell you that I fell in love with you, perhaps before you deserved it. You must deserve my love too. Otherwise—I shan't conceal the fact from you—it may very easily turn into hatred.

Lydia.—Is that so!

Vasilkov.—Refuse me, there's still time!

Lydia.—Why should I refuse you? Ha, ha, ha! We'll stage a little comedy, how to merit each other's love.

Vasilkov.—I don't want a comedy but a well-regulated life—and happiness.

Lydia.—No, you want a comedy and nothing else. You make me an offer, I give my consent: what more do you want? You love me. You have nothing to do but to be happy beyond bounds and not to argue about obligations. Every one should know his own duties. Only poor people argue about how to live—people who have nothing to live on.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I see, I see that you love each other, and your quarrels are only of the literary kind, so to speak.

Vasilkov.—Let me make you a little gift as your fiancé. I bought these things today by accident, and now they've come in handy. (*He hands her a little box, in which are earrings and a brooch.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, but these "things" are worth several thousand.

Vasilkov.—Only three.

Lydia.—I think I might learn to love you. (*She extends her hand to* VASILKOV. *He kisses it respectfully.*)

ACT III

The same drawing room as in the second act, but more richly furnished. To the right of the audience, a door which opens into

VASILKOV'S *study; to the left, a door to* LYDIA'S *rooms; in the center, an exit.*

SCENE I

VASILKOV *comes out of his study with some newspapers and a portfolio. He glances them over quickly, then rings.* VASILY *comes in.)*

Vasilkov.—The Kazan property of the Cheboksarovs is to be sold soon, with its factory and its forest. It's a pity! The factory might bring a good income, and it's a large forest. Vasily Ivanych, go to Pavel Yermolayev and tell him to come down to the Stock Exchange and wait for me there. I must give him a power of attorney. Tell him also to be ready for an emergency. I'm sending him to Kazan.

Vasily.—Yes, sir.

Vasilkov.—You ought to dress better, Vasily Ivanych.

Vasily.—I can't do it, sir. Now, in these boots, in a thick jacket and velvet cap, I'll look just like an English machinist. They behave towards me that way, and every one understands.

Vasilkov.—It's your own business, Vasily Ivanych. Go along. (VASILY *goes out.* VASILKOV *takes out his account book and looks it over.* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *comes out of* LYDIA'S *room.)*

SCENE II

VASILKOV *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Bear! You've been married only a little while, and you're always taken up with business.

Vasilkov.—One thing doesn't hinder the other, mamma dear.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—There you go with your "mamma dear"!

Vasilkov.—It's a good word, affectionate, and just expresses what it's meant to.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Very well, very well. (*She goes over to him.*) But are you happy? Tell me, are you happy, my dear son? (*She takes him by the ear.*)

Vasilkov (*Kissing her hand*).—Yes, I'm happy, perfectly happy. I can say now that in my life there have been a few days of bliss. Ah, mamma dear!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—"Mamma dear," again!

Vasilkov.—Forgive me.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I knew nothing but happiness would come; otherwise I wouldn't have given my Lydia to you.

Vasilkov.—I'd be still happier if . . . if . . .

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Sits down*).—What, "if"? What do you still want, ungrateful boy?

Vasilkov.—If I might spend all my life riding around Moscow, visiting, or going to soirées or concerts, with nothing to do. If only it weren't disgraceful to live so, and I had the means to make it possible!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—If all decent people live so, then it's not a disgrace; and it doesn't take large means.

Vasilkov.—Indeed! To my mind, I've spent a great deal. I'm not including what Lydia's spent, and I don't even know. I don't interfere in her money affairs.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—That's a very good plan.

Vasilkov.—She has her own money and I have my own. But I calculate that I'll have to spend a lot to live a year in this style.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, what nonsense! Let things take care of themselves. Such expenditures can't embarrass you, can they?

Vasilkov.—Why can't they? At this rate, you'd spend twenty-five thousand in six months.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—That's a trifling sum! Do you really begrudge it? This isn't like you.

Vasilkov.—It's not the question at all whether I begrudge it or not, but this: Where can I get it?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I'm sure I don't know. You should know more about that.

Vasilkov.—I'd have to have a million in order to live this way.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—We don't care if you have two.

Vasilkov.—I haven't two, nor even one, for that matter. I've only an average fortune.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I hope you have a half million or so, anyhow. Even that's pretty good.

Vasilkov.—I have an estate, a little capital, and some other interests; but for all that, I can't spend more than seven or eight thousand a year.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—But the mines?

Vasilkov.—What do you mean? What mines?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—The gold mines.

Vasilkov.—I haven't even any copper mines, not to speak of gold.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Rises*).—Why did you deceive us so cruelly then?

Vasilkov.—How did I deceive you?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You said that you had a fortune.

Vasilkov.—And so I have, a very respectable one.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Indeed! You don't know what you're saying. You don't understand the most simple things which even little children know about.

Vasilkov.—But pardon me! Why isn't it a fortune? What is it, then?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What? Poverty, beggary, that's what it is! What you call a fortune is sufficient for a bachelor, to be sure; he could buy gloves on it. But what are you going to do with my poor daughter?

Vasilkov.—I wanted to make her happy and I shall try to do so.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Without any money? It's ridiculous!

Vasilkov.—I have enough, and I'm trying to acquire more.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What! Enough? She must have a fortune, and you can't acquire one. They won't give you a concession for farming the liquor tax, and they won't give you one for building a railroad. No, you can only inherit a fortune or else win it at cards if you're very lucky.

Vasilkov.—No, there's another way still: you can rob some one. Don't you think I'd better try that?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Is that what you think? How well you know me! No, I see that I'll have to take my own measures and correct our mistake.

Vasilkov.—Correct what mistake? I beg of you, don't interfere in other people's affairs. (*He picks up his hat.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Are you going out?

Vasilkov.—It's time I did. (*He goes out.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I'll have still more trouble with this son-in-law. And yet, who would have married Lydia if he'd known that she didn't have a penny of her own? We must do the best we can for him. There's no help for it. (ANDREY *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Kuchumov.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—How fortunate! (*To* ANDREY.) Show him in. (ANDREY *goes out.*) I'll ask his advice about it right now. (KUCHUMOV *comes in.*)

Scene III

Nadezhda Antonovna *and* Kuchumov

Kuchumov.—"*Pace e gioia son con voi!*"

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I'm so glad to see you. Sit down.

Kuchumov (*Sitting down*) "*Pace e gioia*" . . . . But where's our nymph?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—She's flitted off to make some calls. She'll be back soon.

Kuchumov.—And the satyr who stole her away from us? Where's he?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—He's gone out on business. He's always taken up with affairs of one kind or another.

Kuchumov.—He's a dried-up fellow! But why bother ourselves about him anyway? He's only a husband, and here we pine away and lick our chops, like the fox after the grapes.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Old man, old man, I don't know what to make of you!

Kuchumov.—My heart's still young, Nadezhda Antonovna. I'm a volcanic nature.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, yes. Have you received a letter from my husband?

Kuchumov.—Yes. Don't disturb yourself! I'll send the money to him tomorrow without fail. What a paltry sum it is! Put it out of your mind.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I have one more request to make of you.

Kuchumov.—What is it? Tell me. I should be glad, very glad, to help you.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Couldn't you get a more profitable position for one of my friends, and a guardianship, besides; or the management of a rich estate?

Kuchumov.—I'll have to know who it's for.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Shrugging her shoulders*).—For my son-in-law.

Kuchumov.—Ah, his business is going badly, I see. I expected as much.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, my dear friend, we've made a little mistake.

Kuchumov.—What right did he have to marry your daughter? I suppose he pretended he would shower her with gold, and now you have to feed him. Do you know, he must be an extortionist by nature. There must be a lot of shyster blood in him. What's he looking for a position for? So that he can take bribes? How can I ever recommend him? He'll probably disgrace me, the scamp.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Have pity on me. He's my son-in-law.

Kuchumov.—But you said yourself that you were mistaken in him. I never did like his face.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Come, come! Shouldn't you like to be a man's patron when he has such a nice little wife?

Kuchumov.—I shouldn't like to? Who told you that? Of course I should.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I know Lydia. She wouldn't want to be ungrateful.

Kuchumov.—I'll try every resource. . . . I'll stir up all my acquaintances.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You think that women don't know how to be grateful? No, if they take it into their heads . . .

Kuchumov.—I'll look after it right away. . . . How, what, where to? I'm at your command. (LYDIA *comes in.*)

SCENE IV

NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, KUCHUMOV *and* LYDIA

Kuchumov.—Ah, ah, I'm dumb.

Lydia.—I'd be very sorry if you should become dumb, for you talk so nicely. I'm worn out. (*She sits down in an armchair.*) I've made a tour of all Moscow.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes indeed, Lydia, Grigory Borisovich not only speaks good words, but he does good deeds. Tomorrow he's going to send your father the money for the repurchase of the estate, and in that he's doing us a great service. We must be very, very grateful to him. (*She glances over at her daughter.*) (ANDREY *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Glumov.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ask him to come to my room. I'll receive him there. (*She goes out.* ANDREY *follows her.*)

Scene V

Kuchumov *and* Lydia

Lydia.—Tell me, why are you so good? When you help some one else, you rob yourself. What induced you to?

Kuchumov.—And you, you ask me?

Lydia.—Why shouldn't I ask you?

Kuchumov.—Not only with my property but with my life, I'm ready to . . .

Lydia.—It's most likely that I shan't need such a sacrifice. But are you really sending money to my father?

Kuchumov.—Tomorrow.

Lydia.—That's splendid of you. We can't help but value such friendship.

Kuchumov.—It's more than friendship, Lydia Yuryevna, much more. Let me tell you, I'd rather buy that estate outright from your father and give it to you.

Lydia.—If that's the case, buy it and give it to me. I love presents.

Kuchumov.—I'll write your father tomorrow that I'm buying the estate from him and that I'll send him a three hundred and eighty thousand deposit. What's money to me! All I want is your good will, nothing but your good will.

Lydia.—How can I express my good will to you? You're just like one of the family.

Kuchumov (*Coming close to her*).—Like one of the family, of the family . . .

Lydia.—But you can be a real relative to me! You're a little too old for a brother. Do you want to be my daddy for a while?

Kuchumov (*Kneeling and kissing her hand*).—Daddy, daddy!

Lydia (*Drawing away her hand*).—You're making fun, daddy!

Kuchumov.—Yes, yes! (*He kisses her hand again.* Glumov *appears at the doorway and quickly withdraws.*)

Lydia (*Rises*).—It's a shame for you to play pranks—you're not a young spark. (Kuchumov *rises.* Andrey *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Telyatev.

Lydia.—Show him in. (Andrey *goes out.*)

Kuchumov.—*Addio, mia carina.* I'll attend to your affairs!

Lydia.—What affairs?

Kuchumov.—You'll find out afterwards. (*He goes out.*) (TELYATEV *comes in.*)

SCENE VI

LYDIA *and* TELYATEV

Telyatev.—Punish me, only do it quick. If you want to pout at me, then I'll run off somewhere into the forest. You'd better beat me, only be merciful afterwards. I can't live without you, I'll get melancholia and shoot myself like an Englishman.

Lydia.—Why should I get angry at you?

Telyatev.—Ah, how cruelly you speak! Your words are like daggers.

Lydia.—In what way are you worse than others? There are some who are even worse than you.

Telyatev.—There you go again! Do you want to tear me limb from limb? Tell me right out that I'm a good-for-nothing.

Lydia.—I shan't deny it. You've done me a great wrong, a very great one! You're the cause of my marrying a man whom I don't love.

Telyatev.—Don't you love him? That's fine!

Lydia.—No, and I think he doesn't love me either.

Yelyatev.—He doesn't! Splendid!

Lydia.—What's good about that?

Telyatev.—I don't know what you think about it, but for us rakish bachelors it's a godsend. We're just like orphans, looking all our lives for such things to turn up.

Lydia.—You're immoral to the marrow of your bones.

Telyatev.—Well, scold me a little more if you can.

Lydia.—No, I've scolded you enough. Why should I? Because you love me? Can I scold you for that? Or because you didn't marry me when you loved me? That's all past and gone. We can't remedy that misfortune.

Telyatev.—We can't marry, that's true, but we can still love.

Lydia.—Can I forbid you? This flatters a woman's vanity. The more admirers, the better.

Telyatev.—But why should you have so many? Take just one for the present.

Lydia.—You don't know life very well yet. It's not a good plan to have just one admirer, for rumors will begin to circulate about you right away; but if you have a lot, then no one suspects anything. How could they tell who was the real one?

Telyatev.—Then you'll take me as the real one, with four or five supernumeraries?

Lydia (*Laughing*).—You're such a joker that I simply can't get angry at you.

Telyatev.—So you aren't angry any more! May I make love to you now?

Lydia.—Do! I love to listen to you. You're a dear, aren't you!

Telyatev.—By heaven, I am! How beautiful you've grown! Do you know what a change there is in you? Such a change always . . .

Lydia.—No, please, have pity on me! I've only been married for a little while. I haven't had time to grow accustomed to your speeches! I know what you say to married women.

Telyatev.—How sorry I am that you aren't used to it yet! Hurry up and grow accustomed, or else it'll be dull. Let's go back to the old way. Shall you install your *cavalier servante* soon?

Lydia.—But is that good form in our country?

Telyatev.—We must introduce that excellent custom. It's no shame to imitate a good thing.

Lydia.—But what'll the husbands say?

Telyatev.—They'll get used to it little by little. Well, of course, at first they'll beat up a number of us cavaliers pretty severely—especially merchants will; and then they'll drag a lot off to court; but afterwards things will take their own course. The first must sacrifice themselves, but it'll be smooth sailing for the others. No useful innovation succeeds without some sacrifice.

Lydia.—Splendid, but it'll take a long time to establish that order of things.

Telyatev.—We're making a beginning. Already a few victims have been brought in: they painted one of them indigo blue; the others fared still worse.

Lydia.—Well, when that praiseworthy custom becomes fixed . . .

Telyatev.—Then you'll accept me?

Lydia.—If you deserve it. You're very fickle.

Telyatev.—Why am I fickle, do you know?

Lydia.—Because your soul's shallow.

Telyatev.—No! Because I've no one to be constant to. Command me, and I'll be more constant than a telegraph pole.

Lydia.—We'll see.

Telyatev.—Will you give me a trial? Why, just for that I'll fall at your feet this minute.

Lydia.—No, spare me that ceremony, please! We can get along without it.

Telyatev.—As you please; and still, I feel that I must show you some visible, palpable mark of affection.

Lydia (*Gives him her hand*).—Kiss my hand! (GLUMOV *enters and stops in the background.*)

SCENE VII

TELYATEV, LYDIA *and* GLUMOV

Telyatev (*Not noticing* GLUMOV).—In a glove? What kind of a kiss is that! The electricity my heart is so filled with, which I want to transmit to you, won't reach your heart through a glove. Kid's a bad conductor. (*He kisses her hand a little above the glove.*)

Lydia.—Come, that's enough! One can't grant you anything. You always go a little farther than you're permitted.

Telyatev.—But is it much farther? It's only an inch—it's not worth mentioning!

Lydia.—An inch today and another tomorrow—in that way . . . (*Notices* GLUMOV.) Ah! Yegor Dmitriyevich! We didn't see you.

Glumov.—That's all right. Go on, go on! I won't disturb you.

Lydia.—What do you mean, go on? Why do you speak that way? You surely don't wish to attach any importance to the fact that I let Telyatev, my old friend, kiss my hand? I'd gladly let you do the same. (*She extends her hand to him.*)

Glumov.—Thank you humbly, I permit myself to kiss the hand only of my mother or of a mistress.

Lydia.—Well, in that case, you'll never kiss mine.

Glumov.—How can we tell? Life is long. Mountain can never meet mountain* . . .

Lydia.—Let's go, Ivan Petrovich. (*She gives her hand to* TELYATEV.) He's a rude fellow. (*To* GLUMOV.) Are you waiting for my husband? Wait a little longer, he'll be here soon.

Glumov.—Yes, I'm waiting for him. I have quite a few interesting things to tell him.

* The end of the saying is, "But a man can always meet a man".

Lydia.—Please make him laugh. He's so very serious. No one knows better than you how to cheer up a person. You're so amusing. (Lydia *and* Telyatev *go out.*)

Scene VIII

Glumov *alone, later* Vasily

Glumov.—Yes, I'll amuse you, I will! Ah, Lydia Yuryevna, bravo! I'd just thought of coming to her for a flirtation and paying a pleasant little call, but there were a pair of 'em. Now all I have to do is to set all three of them at odds, including the husband. Vasily! (Vasily *comes in.*)

Vasily.—What is it, sir?

Glumov.—When does Kuchumov usually come here?

Vasily.—Always between one and two, sir. My master's never at home then.

Glumov.—Where is he then?

Vasily.—At his session. All the rich people gather there too and discuss their affairs together.

Glumov.—What kind of affairs?

Vasily.—How to improve things and make more money.

Glumov.—But is your master rich?

Vasily.—Of course.

Glumov.—Ah, but to your way of thinking, a man's rich if he has a hundred-ruble note.

Vasily.—Perhaps he hasn't a hundred, nor a thousand, but even more still.

Glumov.—That's not much money.

Vasily.—If we seek, why we'll find. But what's the use of talking! I've had no orders as yet, and not every one can understand. It's a hard thing to do—it isn't just like lying down. Perhaps we've stayed awake nights and worried to death. What do you know about me? I was within eleven versts of London and they sent me back with the machines. So naturally there's a lot that we can't talk about. (*He goes out.*)

Glumov.—What nonsense he did talk! Kuchumov comes here between one and two. That's an important point, we must write that down. (Vasilkov, Lydia, Telyatev *and* Nadezhda Antonovna *come in.*)

SCENE IX

GLUMOV, VASILKOV, LYDIA, TELYATEV *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Glumov (*To* VASILKOV).—How do you do!

Vasilkov.—How do you do!

Glumov.—Why are you so busy?

Vasilkov.—I have more to do than take my dogs out walking, like yourself. Gentlemen, excuse me if I leave. Talk with the ladies, but I haven't any time. I have a great deal of business on hand. I must go and look after it.

Telyatev and Glumov.—Go along! Go along!

Vasilkov.—By dinner time I'll be at liberty. If you want to dine with us, then stay without ceremony! I beg of you, do! And if you don't want to, why, take yourselves off. (*He goes into his study.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—He's polite, to say the least.

Telyatev.—We mustn't get angry at him, he's a good fellow. But really, hadn't we better be going?

Glumov.—Let's go. I don't like simple family dinners. There's always something familiar in them. Either they have the kvas in a big water decanter in the center of the table, or serve homemade liqueurs, or the soup tureen's lost a handle, or the tarts smell of candle grease. Of course, your table's perfectly appointed, but just the same, I prefer to take my dinners at the hotel or at the club.

Telyatev.—Let's go to the English Club. They're having a dinner there today.

Glumov.—All right. (*They take their leave and go out.*)

SCENE X

LYDIA *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Lydia, either your husband's stingy or he hasn't any property.

Lydia (*Frightened*).—What are you saying?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Just a little while ago he told me that his income wouldn't permit him to live this way and that we must cut down expenses. Whatever would happen if he knew how many debts we incurred before the wedding, and that he must pay them all? He doesn't even want to know what your debts are.

Lydia.—But where are his mines then?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—They're an invention of Glumov's.

Lydia.—I'm ruined. I'm like a butterfly, I can't live without gold dust; I'll die, I'll die.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I think that he really has money, only he's stingy. If you were a little more affectionate with him. . . . Make a real effort.

Lydia (*Thoughtfully*).—Affectionate? Affectionate? Oh, if that's all that's necessary, he'll see such affection that he'll choke from happiness. That'll be practice for me. I must test myself to see how strong my caresses are, and what they're worth in gold. I must have that first of all—I can't live without gold.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You're saying terrible words, Lydia.

Lydia.—There's nothing more terrible than poverty.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—There is, Lydia—vice.

Lydia.—Vice! What's vice? It's stupid and unreasonable to fear vice when every one's vicious. Poverty's the most terrible vice. No, no! This will be my first woman's exploit. Until now I've been modestly flirtatious, but now I'll test myself and see to what extremes I can go without shame.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Oh, stop, Lydia! This is terrible, terrible!

Lydia.—You're an old woman, poverty doesn't frighten you. I'm young, I want to live; and for me, life is where there are brilliancy, and the servile obedience of men, and mad luxury.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I can't listen to you.

Lydia.—Who's wealthier, Kuchumov or Telyatev? I must know this; they're both in my hands.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—They're both wealthy and spend generously, but Kuchumov's richer and more good-hearted.

Lydia.—That's all I need. Where are the bills from the stores and the shops? Give them to me!

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Takes them out of her pocket*).—Here they are, all of them. (*She goes out.*) (LYDIA *takes them, and with a firm step goes into her husband's study.* VASILKOV, *coming out of it, meets her.*)

SCENE XI

LYDIA *and* VASILKOV

Lydia.—I was coming to see you.

Vasilkov.—And I to you.

Lydia.—That's splendid. We met on the road: where shall we go to now, to your room or to mine? This way? (*She points to her own rooms.*) This way, shall we? Tell me, my darling! Yes?

Vasilkov.—Let's stop half way, and talk a bit together until dinner time. Forgive me, Lydia, for leaving you alone so often.

Lydia.—The less I see you, the dearer you are to me. (*She embraces him.*)

Vasilkov.—What's come over you, Lydia? Such a change surprises me!

Lydia.—Am I not a human being, a woman? Why did I marry you? There's no reason why I should be ashamed of my love for you! I'm not a little girl, I'm twenty-four years old. I don't know how others feel about it, but for me a husband is everything—do you understand, *everything*! Even so, I avoided you for a long time, but you see, it's quite useless.

Vasilkov.—Quite useless.

Lydia.—And now, when I take it into my head to smother you with embraces, I'm going to do it. Please let me.

Vasilkov.—Of course I'll let you.

Lydia.—I don't know what's happened to me. At first, I didn't love you, and then suddenly I became so passionately attached to you. Do you hear how my heart's beating? My dear, my happiness! (*She weeps.*)

Vasilkov.—But what are you crying for?

Lydia.—For joy.

Vasilkov.—I ought to cry too. I sought in you only an elegant exterior and I've found a good, tender heart. Love me just a little, I'm worth it.

Lydia.—I love you already, my barbarian.

Vasilkov.—Yes, I'm a barbarian, but I have tender feelings and a cultivated taste. Give me your beautiful hand. (*He takes her hand.*) How lovely it is! I'm sorry that I'm not an artist.

Lydia.—My hand! I have nothing of my own, it's all yours, yours! (*She leans on his breast.*)

Vasilkov (*Kissing her hand*).—Give me both of them! (LYDIA *hides the bills in his pocket.*) What are you hiding there?

Lydia.—Oh, please, don't ask me! My dear, I beg of you, don't ask me!

Vasilkov.—Why do you beg me so earnestly? If you have a secret, keep it to yourself—I don't care about other people's secrets.

Lydia.—Could I keep anything from you? Haven't we one soul? This is my secret: In your pocket, there, are the bills from the stores for my trousseau, which mamma has to pay. But just now she's in difficulties; papa isn't sending her any money: he has some big enterprise or other on hand. I wanted to pay them out of my own money, but I don't know whether it's available just now. See what nonsense!

Vasilkov.—Show me these bills.

Lydia (*Gives him the bills*).—There they are! But why should you pay them? I don't understand.

Vasilkov.—This is why: I'll pay for your trousseau in return for the happiness that you've just given me. It's all the same. You see, I might have married a poor girl and had to give her a dowry on my own account, while even then I shouldn't know whether she loved me—and you do.

Lydia.—No, no! I ought to pay mamma something too for all the trouble she's taken for me.

Vasilkov.—Keep your money for yourself, my child. Vasily! (VASILY *comes in.*) Hand me the bills on the table in the study. (VASILY *brings the bills and goes out.* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *comes in.* VASILKOV *sits down by the chair and begins to look over the bills.*)

SCENE XII

VASILKOV, LYDIA *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Lydia (*Aside to* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA).—He'll pay for everything. (*She lies down on the divan and picks up a book. Aloud.*) Mamma, we mustn't bother him, he's busy. (*Aside to* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, *who sits by her head.*) I have him just where I want him.

Vasilkov (*Adding up the bills*).—Lydia, here's a bill for wallpaper and draperies which couldn't possibly be counted in with your trousseau.

Lydia.—Oh, my dear, we had to do all this redecorating on account of the wedding. So many people began to come here. If it hadn't been for my wedding, we shouldn't have decided on such an expenditure.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—We'd have waited until spring anyway.

Vasilkov.—Well, all right, then, all right. (*He goes on adding.*)

Lydia (*Aside to* Nadezhda Antonovna).—I tell you, he'll pay for everything, absolutely everything. (*A maid comes in, dressed very stylishly, and hands* Lydia *a bill. She motions towards her husband. The maid gives the bill to* Vasilkov. *He, after glancing it over, nods his head towards his wife and goes on counting. The maid again hands the bill to* Lydia. *She takes it and carelessly throws it on the table. The maid goes out.* Andrey *comes in with two bills: the same process is repeated.* Andrey *goes out.* Vasily *comes in with a dozen bills and gives them to* Vasilkov.)

Vasily.—Here's a pile of 'em, sir. What a lot of Frenchmen are waiting there!

Vasilkov.—Give them to your mistress! (Vasily *hands them to her.* Lydia *throws them on the floor.*)

Vasily (*Gathering up the bills*).—You shouldn't throw them away. A bill—that's a document. You've got to pay money on it.

Lydia.—Get out of here! I can't bear to look at you. (Vasily *smooths out all the bills, lays them carefully on the table, and goes away.*)

Vasilkov (*Gets up and walks about the room*).—It's done. It comes to thirty-two thousand, five hundred and forty-seven rubles and ninety-eight kopeks. That's too large a sum for me to pay, but I gave you my word in the beginning, and so I must pay it. Today I'll borrow as much as I need for it, but in order to keep our budget balanced, we must decrease our expenses decidedly for a long time. Across the street directly opposite, there's a little one-story house with three front windows. I've looked it over, it'll be plenty large enough for us. We must dismiss the servants. I'll keep Vasily for myself, and a maid for you, at lower wages. We'll dismiss our man cook and hire a woman. We shan't keep horses.

Lydia (*Laughs*).—How can we get along without horses? Why, horses were made for people to ride on. Don't you know that? What shall we ride in? No one uses balloons yet. Ha, ha, ha!

Vasilkov.—When it's dry, you can go on foot; when it's muddy, in a cab.

Lydia.—So that's what your love amounts to.

Vasilkov.—It's because I love you that I don't want to be ruined.

Lydia.—Hurry, the commis are waiting. They're punctual people. It's discourteous! They must be paid.

Vasilkov.—Pay them yourself, you have your own money.

Lydia.—I won't pay them.

Vasilkov.—They'll force you to by law.

Lydia.—But I've nothing to pay them with. Good Heavens! (*She covers her face with her hands.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Angrily*).—Why do you torment us? We deserve more consideration. We've made a mistake; you are poor, but we're doing our best to correct this. Of course, you could hardly understand our delicate feelings because you're so rude and rough yourself; but let me cite my husband as an example. He had a very prominent and responsible position, a great deal of money passed through his hands; and do you know, he so loved his daughter and me that whenever a very large sum was needed to uphold the dignity of our family, or even simply to gratify our fancies, he—he didn't recognize the difference between his own and the state's money. Do you understand . . . he sacrificed himself for the sacred feeling of family love. He was tried and had to leave Moscow.

Vasilkov.—Good enough for him.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You don't know how to appreciate him. Appreciate us at least! You're poor, we won't leave you in poverty, we have connections. We'll look around and without fail we'll find you a good position and a rich guardianship. All you need to do is to imitate my husband, that exemplary father. (*She goes up to* Vasilkov, *lays her hand on his shoulder and says in a whisper.*) Don't be too particular! Do you understand? (*She points to his pocket.*) And I'll see to it that they look through their fingers at you. Make use of every opportunity.

Vasilkov.—Do leave me alone with your advice. There's no extremity, and no beautiful woman, who'll make a thief out of me. If you say a word to me about thievery, I shan't stand on ceremony. Lydia, stop crying! I'll pay your bills, but it's for the last time, and with this provision: that tomorrow we move into that little house with the three windows—there's a room there for mamma too—and lead a quiet life. We shan't receive any one. (*He looks over the bills.*)

Lydia (*Leaning on her mother's shoulder*).—We must give in to him. (*Aside.*) We'll have money, and you and I'll live on the best. (*Aloud to her husband.*) My dear, I agree; I mustn't oppose you but thank you. (*Aside to her mother.*) How I'll fool him! (*Aloud to her husband.*) We shan't receive any one.

Vasilkov (*Adding up figures*).—I know; you're a dear, clever little wife.

Lydia.—But old Mr. Kuchumov; he's a dear friend of the whole family, almost a relative.

Vasilkov (*Adding*).—Well, Kuchumov can come. (LYDIA *convulsively presses her mother's hand.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Aside*).—What is it you're scheming out?

Lydia.—Something. No one's ever humiliated me as he has. I'm not a woman now, I'm a serpent. And I'll sting him hard.

Vasilkov.—But you're a regular spendthrift!

Lydia (*Throws herself on his neck*).—Come, forgive me, my darling, my life! I'm a weak-witted, spoiled woman, but I'll try to do better. I need such lessons. Don't spare me!

Vasilkov.—And so we're to have peace?

Lydia.—Yes, yes, for a long time—forever!

Vasilkov.—Well, my dear, that's splendid! We know each other now, at least. You know that I'm a close reckoner, and I know that you're spoiled; but on the other hand, you love me and make me happy—something which a rough working-man couldn't have let himself hope for, and which is dear to me, very dear, my Lydia, my angel! (*He embraces her.*)

ACT IV

A very modest drawing room, which serves also as a study. There are windows on the sides. Back stage, on the right of the audience, is a door into a vestibule; on the left, a door into the inner rooms; between the doors, a tiled stove; the furnishings are poor; there is a desk and an old piano.

SCENE I

VASILKOV *is sitting by the table gathering up his papers.* VASILY *stands behind his chair.*

Vasilkov.—Well, Vasily Ivanych, do you think your mistress is beginning to grow accustomed to the new lodging and to you?

Vasily.—I don't know what to say, sir, as far as the lodging's concerned. She and her mother are always laughing together in French. But for me, the Lord help me! I don't know how it is I'm still alive.

Vasilkov.—What do you mean? Deuce take you!

Vasily.—Just think of this, Savva Gennadiyevich, sir! They want me to wear top boots, but I can't do it. What kind of a footman would I make when I'm your servant, practically your associate? Perhaps you and I—pardon me, Savva Gennadiyevich—have seen want together. Perhaps we were drowned in the same river when we were out on business.

Vasilkov.—Yes, yes, to be sure. (*He rises from the table.*)

Vasily.—And she almost ate me up because of the fruits, too.

Vasilkov.—What fruits?

Vasily.—Of course, such as go with my calling . . . and there wasn't any more than this. (*He shows on his finger.*)

Vasilkov.—Of what?

Vasily.—Of radishes—just that much. I was sitting in the vestibule and eating them.

Vasilkov.—What a fellow you are, Vasily Ivanych.

Vasily.—But you can't help it, Savva Gennadiyevich, sir! I'm a working man, brought up on 'em. But she's dearer to me than God knows what.

Vasilkov.—Listen then, Vasily Ivanych. Don't let any one in except Kuchumov when I'm not here.

Vasily.—Be assured, sir. (*They go out.* LYDIA *comes in.*)

SCENE II

LYDIA *alone*

Lydia.—How long it takes that horrid old man to come! Here I've been wearing myself out for three days in this dog kennel. I'm afraid to go to the window. I suppose people are riding past now just on purpose to see me at the window. And Glumov probably has some verses all made up for the occasion. Dear old Kuchumov, my darling! Save me from this solitary confinement! Mamma and I can move back into the old apartment and live better than before. If I could only cheer myself up with a little music! There's a lot of consolation in a waltz. Whatever they say, Strauss or Gundel are the best connoisseurs of a woman's heart. (*She tries the piano.*) What a tin pan!

He had that put in on purpose to humiliate me. Wait a little while, my friend, I'll console you. (*She stops to listen and hears the sound of a carriage.*) I'd look out, but it's a disgrace for a woman of position to go to a window like this with little panes! Is it Kuchumov? He always comes at two o'clock. It's he, it's he! He's coming up on the porch. I hear his step. Will something come of it? (KUCHUMOV's *voice is heard behind the scenes, "Is your mistress at home?"* VASIL's *voice replies, "Yes, indeed, sir! She's in the study!"* KUCHUMOV *comes in.*)

SCENE III

LYDIA *and* KUCHUMOV

Lydia.—So at last you've come, daddy!

Kuchumov (*Kisses her hand, looks threateningly around the room*).—What's this? What's this? What kind of a place have you dropped into? What surroundings! This is a regular road house. But I ask you, what does it all mean? My darling, don't get angry at me for asking you so roughly, but one can't talk any other way in such lodgings. How did this happen? How did you come to humiliate yourself so? You disgrace the name of Cheboksarov.

Lydia.—Don't reproach me, but pity me instead.

Kuchumov.—I can't pity you, young lady. You're disgracing your family. What would your poor father say if he knew how you've lowered yourself?

Lydia.—But what can I do?

Kuchumov.—Run away, young lady, run away without looking back.

Lydia.—Where to? Mamma has no money. He's paid all our debts.

Kuchumov.—That was his plain duty. He's won a treasure; and in return for all the happiness that you've brought him, he ought to carry out every one of your wishes, that walrus!

Lydia.—Evidently he doesn't regard it as a great good fortune to have won me.

Kuchumov.—If he doesn't, so much the better. You should realize your own worth. Move back to your first lodging with your mamma. There's nothing bad about that, but it's a disgrace to live in a hen coop.

Lydia.—But daddy, what shall we live on? Mamma hasn't anything, nor I either. And we can't rely on our credit.

Kuchumov.—Credit! Shame on you, shame on you! All you needed to do was to come straight to me. You were ashamed to ask me for money, but you aren't ashamed to live in such a hut, fairy as you are. You've forgotten your power, light-winged fairy. You've only to make one gesture, and this hut will turn into a castle.

Lydia.—What kind of gesture, daddy?

Kuchumov.—You're a fairy and a woman: you ought to know better than we men. Fairies and women have all kinds of gestures at their command.

Lydia (*Throwing herself on his neck*).—Is it this one, daddy?

Kuchumov.—Yes, yes, yes . . . (*With his eyes closed he drops down on a chair.*) Will forty thousand be enough for the first time?

Lydia.—I don't know, daddy.

Kuchumov.—You won't need a great deal right now. You'll be moving back into your old lodgings; they're beautifully decorated and they're still vacant. The wardrobe for your gowns there is exquisite! Forty thousand'll be more than enough for you to begin with. Listen, if you don't take it, I'll throw it out of the carriage window, I'll lose it on purpose at the club. At any rate I'll squander it one way or another if you don't take it.

Lydia.—Well, give it to me then, daddy.

Kuchumov (*Feels in his pocket*).—Ah, the devil take it! It's just like me to do a thing like that! I put my wallet on the table on purpose, and went off and forgot it. Child, forgive me! (*He kisses her hand.*) I'll send the money to you tomorrow at the new lodgings! I hope that you'll move this very day. I'll order a pie from Einem, and I'll buy a five-pound gold salt cellar from Sazikov and put the money in it. I'd like to give it all in gold coin for luck, but you'll hardly find such a sum. At any rate, I can raise a hundred half-imperials or so.

Lydia (*Stroking his head*).—*Merci, merci*, daddy dear.

Kuchumov.—Bliss, ah bliss! What does money matter? Even if I had millions and couldn't see such eyes or feel such caresses, I should be a beggar. (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *comes in.*)

SCENE IV

LYDIA, KUCHUMOV *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Lydia.—Mamma, Grigory Borisovich advises us to move back to our old lodgings.

Kuchumov.—Of course. You can't stay here, my dear lady; you simply can't.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, Grigory Borisovich, don't speak of it. What don't I endure! How I suffer! You know how I was accustomed to live in my youth; now I have hysterics at the mere recollection of it. Lydia and I would have taken refuge with my husband, but he says for us not to come. He doesn't mention your money at all.

Kuchumov.—It hadn't reached him yet. (*He counts on his fingers.*) Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. . . . He received it yesterday evening or this morning.

Lydia.—Mamma, we'd better move back immediately.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, Lydia, we must think it over. It seems to me that your husband's only pretending, and that he's very rich.

Lydia.—Whether he's rich or not, he's humiliated us, and it's all over between us. Grigory Borisovich has done a great deal for us; and he doesn't want me to live with my husband. We'll be well provided for; daddy's promised me so.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Daddy! Where have you learned that word? Ah, Lydia, what are you saying! It's impossible, unbearable for a mother to listen to.

Lydia.—Speak! Are you ashamed? I've resolved to call nothing but poverty, shame. Everything else is honorable, permissible for me. Mamma, you and I are women; we haven't enough money to live even decently, but you want to live in luxury. How then can you expect me to be scrupulous? No, you'll have to shut your eyes to a few things in spite of yourself. That's what all mothers must expect who bring up their children in luxury and leave them penniless.

Kuchumov.—Bennissimo! I never thought to find so much worldly wisdom in such a young woman.

Lydia.—Mamma, daddy's promised us forty thousand for the new establishment.

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Joyfully*).—Really? (*To* KUCHUMOV.) You're very, very good. And still, we must think it over a little.

Lydia.—Think what over? This is humiliation, that's happiness.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Let's go to my room and consider the question from every side. The chief thing is to keep up proprieties.

Lydia (*To her mother*).—Rely on me for that.

Kuchumov.—I'm not a child any longer. I know how to enjoy happiness on the sly. I don't talk much. (VASILY'S *voice is heard behind the scenes, "I'm ordered not to let you in."* GLUMOV'S *voice: "What a liar you are."* KUCHUMOV, LYDIA *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *go out.* KUCHUMOV'S *hat is left on the table.* VASILY *and* GLUMOV *come in.*)

SCENE V

GLUMOV *and* VASILY

Glumov.—What are you trying to put over me, you blockhead? You're forbidden to let me in! It's impossible!

Vasily.—I'm not a blockhead at all. They make caps on blocks. And it's not my fault that they told me not to let you in.

Glumov.—Who told you not to let me in, your master or your mistress?

Vasily.—Whoever it was, it's all the same to you, and I won't let you in anyway. But if you want to know, this is the way it was: both my master and my mistress ordered me not to, and nothing can make them see you.

Glumov.—You're stupid beyond all words, beyond endurance; but still, you may be able to tell me why you were ordered not to receive me, Don't you know? Didn't you hear, be it even with the rim of your donkey's ear, my amiable friend? Come, tell me; a silver ruble's quite a little money.

Vasily.—Thank you, sir. Let me have it. (*He takes the ruble and puts it in his pocket.*) But what shall I tell you? You can see how matters stand, how we're living. You come to see us, another one comes, a third; and you drink a glass of vodka, a second, a fifth, a tenth; and it all counts up. While our finances, my master says, are pretty shaky. Just judge for yourself! Supposing you feed a handful of idle fellows, there's no earthly use to be gotten out of them, and it's pure loss. Of course, if you have a good, sober circle of acquaintances, it's different, but our acquaintances . . . Good Lord!

Glumov.—Well, that's enough! Give me a piece of paper and take yourself off! I'll write a note to your master and go.

Vasily.—There's the paper, on the table. Only don't you tear off a good sheet when you don't need it! But I'll go; yes, I'll go. (*He goes out.*)

Glumov (*Takes pen and paper*).—What shall I write to him?

(*Notices the hat.*) Whose hat is that? (*Picks it up.*) Ha! Just see! Why, that's Kuchumov's. That means our little prince is here. That's splendid! Vasilkov's received his letter by this time, and Telyatev too. They'll all meet here—then there'll be a scene for you! I'll write something so he won't become suspicious of me. (*He writes, and then reads aloud.*) "My dear friend, I wanted to see you, to confer on a certain matter. I'm sorry that I didn't find you at home. Tomorrow I'll come earlier. Yours truly, Glumov." It's written large. I'll put it in the center of the table, so that he'll see it the first thing. (TELYATEV'S *voice is heard: "Well, I'm coming in anyhow."* TELYATEV *and* VASILY *come in.*)

SCENE VI

GLUMOV, TELYATEV *and* VASILY

Telyatev (*To* GLUMOV).—Have you seen Lydia Yuryevna?

Glumov.—No. What do I want with her? I came to see Savva, but I didn't find him in. I've left a note for him. Goodbye. If you want to see Vasilkov, go to the stock exchange; he spends the whole day there.

Telyatev.—So much the better.

Glumov.—I think he's busy with a new branch of the industry. He's speculating in silk.

Telyatev.—An excellent occupation.

Glumov.—On good days he makes five roubles.

Vasily.—Come sir, that'll do, that's enough!

Glumov.—Do you remember how many provincials have come our way? You think one of 'em's got mountains of gold—he cuts such a figure. But you watch—he'll go on a spree for six weeks and then he'll sell himself for a soldier or be sent home under guard, or else his father'll come and snatch him out of the tavern by the hair of his head and take him off home, four hundred versts away. (*He looks at his watch.*) But it's time for me to go. How I have talked! (*He goes out quickly.*)

Telyatev (*Sits down by the table, holding his hat in his left hand*).—Well, how about it, Vasily Ivanych, they told you not to let me in?

Vasily.—Just so, sir.

Telyatev.—Isn't this just one of your stupid tricks, Vasily Ivanych?

Vasily.—No, indeed no. How can you think it! As if I dared!

Telyatev.—And aren't you sorry for me, Vasily Ivanych?

Vasily.—Of course I'm sorry, sir. You aren't at all like the rest.

Telyatev.—Am I better?

Vasily.—Ever so much.

Telyatev.—Sit down, Vasily Ivanych. (VASILY IVANYCH *sits down and rests his hands on his knees.*) Let me talk a little with you.

Vasily.—Do you think I can't?

Telyatev.—I don't think anything. You've been in London, I hear. But haven't you ever been in the Dark Continent?

Vasily.—I've never heard of such a country, sir. Darkness'll keep on being darkness and we can't do anything about it. Besides, we have enough of it by reason of our sins. They keep you just beautifully in the dark. But do the people who live there know what hunger and cold are?

Telyatev.—I don't know about hunger, but it's never cold there, because it's very hot.

Vasily.—Well, let hunger or heat get the best of them, but we'd best keep up our hope.

Telyatev.—Keep up our hope of what?

Vasily.—That all will turn out for the best. Now in our line of work we've gone barefoot and naked. Of course, things have been so from ancient times. God sends it invisibly.

Telyatev.—Vasily Ivanych, it's not safe to go too deep into philosophy.

Vasily.—I can do something else.

Telyatev.—Good-bye, Vasily Ivanych. (*He absent-mindedly picks up* KUCHUMOV'S *hat with his right hand, and tries to put on both hats.*) How's this, Vasily Ivanych?

Vasily.—Every one sins sometimes, sir.

Telyatev.—Where's the sin in this, Vasily Ivanych?

Vasily.—Sometimes they carry 'em off.

Telyatev.—How you babble on, Vasily Ivanych!

Vasily.—Do this, sir: try 'em both on, and the one that fits is yours.

Telyatev.—Those are sensible words, Vasily Ivanych. It's a pleasure to hear them. (*He tries his own on first.*) This is mine, but whose is that? Ah, that belongs to our little prince. So he's here?

Vasily (*Mysteriously*).—Yes, here.

Telyatev.—Where on earth is he? (VASILY *silently and majestically points to the door into the inner room.*) Why do they receive him, when they won't receive me?

Vasily.—Because he's a relative.

Telyatev.—As much a relative as you are, Vasily Ivanych! Excuse me, I'll stay, and you go back to the hall.

Vasily.—It happens that my master's never at home at this time, but if you try it again . . . .

Telyatev.—Come, that's enough, Vasily Ivanych! Return politeness for politeness, or else I'll tell you, "Clear out!"

Vasily.—You can do anything, sir, anything. (*He goes out.*)

SCENE VII

TELYATEV *alone*

Telyatev (*Takes a letter from his pocket and reads.*)

Telyatev, don't be credulous,
The world's a trap for man.
The little prince is sedulous
To fool you—if he can—
  At Madam Vasilkov's, at two o'clock.

And that's just what he did. He's a relative, but they can't receive me. What shall I do? Somehow it's embarassing to go away without seeing any one, it goes against the grain. I'll wait for them, and see how she'll say good-bye to him. How surprised they'll be, how they'll open their mouths when I appear before them like a *statua gentilissima*. But the statue of the Commander—a certain German swore to me until he cried—that represents conscience. Their position will be terrible! But wouldn't it be better to appear myself before them? . . . It isn't quite polite, of course. Where have they hidden themselves?. (*He goes over to the door and listens.*) There's no one there. I'll look a little farther. (*He opens the door carefully, goes out and closes it behind him as carefully.* VASILKOV *and* VASILY *come in.*)

SCENE VIII

VASILKOV *and* VASILY

Vasilkov (*Quickly*).—Did any one come while I was gone?

Vasily.—Mr. Glumov. There's a note he left.

Vasilkov (*Sternly*).—And was there any one else?

Vasilkov.—Mr. Kuchumov, but . . .

Vasilkov.—All right, all right, you can go. (VASILY *goes out.*) Kuchumov's so old that one can't be suspicious of him. My wife's a woman of taste. (*He stops in front of the table, pondering, and sees* GLUMOV's *note. He takes a letter out of his pocket and compares it with* GLUMOV's *note.*) No, they're quite different, but I thought it was he. (*He reads the letter.*)

The husband hurries to the bourse,
A busy man is he;
He thinks his wife sits still at home
As bored as she can be,
And folds her hands, and waits, and waits,
Till he comes home to tea—
Unhappy husband!

It's lucky if a husband has
An extra friend or two,
When his wife sits alone at home,
With nothing else to do.
He's busy, but she claps her hands,
She's neither bored nor blue—
Unhappy husband.

"Be at home without fail at two o'clock, and you'll understand what these words mean."
(*A brief silence.*) What is this, a joke or a misfortune? If it's a joke, then it's stupid and unpardonable to make fun of a man when you don't know his heart. If it's a misfortune, why has it come so soon and so unexpectedly? If I really understood my wife, I shouldn't hesitate. I know how a simple woman or girl loves and feels; but what the feelings of a woman of the world are, I don't know. I don't see her soul; I'm a stranger to her and she's a stranger to me. She doesn't need a heart, but only speeches. And I can't make pretty speeches. Oh, cursed speeches! How easily you understand a person's words, but how slowly you learn to read his mind. Nowadays people talk as they do in the English parliament, but they think as they did in the times of Askold.* And what do they do? Not a thing. But what can this letter mean? I'll go and show it to Lydia. But if, if! . . . God! What should I do then, what? How should I act? No, no, it's shameful to prepare oneself for such an event, it's shameful to play a part! I'll do what my stupid provincial

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* That is, a thousand years ago.

heart prompts me to. (*He opens a case of pistols, examines them, puts them back again; the box remains open. He goes to the door.* TELYATEV *appears, quietly retreating towards him.*)

SCENE IX

VASILKOV *and* TELYATEV

Vasilkov.—Telyatev, that's not the way a friend acts.

Telyatev.—Ah, hello there! (*Softly*) Stand still, wait a minute, they're coming out right away.

Vasilkov.—Answer my questions or I'll kill you on the spot.

Telyatev.—Quieter, I tell you! (*He listens.*) Well, what do you want? Go ahead, ask me!

Vasilkov.—Did you come to see my wife?

Telyatev.—Yes.

Vasilkov.—What for?

Telyatev.—To pass the time away pleasantly, to flirt with her. What queer questions you ask!

Vasilkov.—Why do you come to see my wife and not other women?

Telyatev.—Because I have good taste.

Vasilkov.—We'll have a duel.

Telyatev.—Well, all right, all right, only don't make a noise! I hear voices.

Vasilkov.—Whoever it is, they won't prevent me.

Telyatev.—You've gone crazy, Savva! Come to your senses; drink some cold water.

Vasilkov.—No, Telyatev. I'm a peaceable man, and good-natured; but there are moments in life when . . . Ah, I can't tell you what's going on in my heart. . . . See, I'm crying! . . . Here are the pistols! Take whichever one you please.

Telyatev.—If you want to make me a present, give me both of them. Why break up the set? But if you want to have a duel, why be in such a hurry, you queer fellow? I'm going to have a good dinner today. After a full-course dinner, life's always tedious for me. Let's have our duel then.

Vasilkov.—No, no, this minute, here, in this room, without witnesses.

Telyatev.—Well, I have a mind of my own too, and I tell you plainly I won't take this as our dueling ground. What kind of a place is it? We must do everything up properly, Savva. Yes! Wait a minute! First of all, tell me why you moved into this abominable hole?

Vasilkov.—I didn't have the money to live better.

Telyatev.—Then let me give it to you. (*He takes out his wallet.*) How much do you need? Come, please, take it all. I can make my way in Moscow without money.

Vasilkov.—Do you want to purchase my indulgence with money? Do you want to buy my wife from me? (*He picks up his pistol.*)

Telyatev.—Listen, my dear friend, you'd better kill me rather than insult me! I respect you more than you think, more than you deserve.

Vasilkov.—Forgive me! I'm not responsible.

Telyatev.—I'm offering you money simply out of the goodness of my heart; or perhaps more because of the general loose ways of our times. When you have money, give it to the first person you meet; when you haven't, borrow it from him.

Vasilkov.—All right, give me the money! How much is there?

Telyatev.—Count it later. Five thousand or so.

Vasilkov.—I must count it now and give you a receipt for it.

Telyatev.—Please spare me that, I beg of you. They take receipts from me, but I don't require them of any one. Even if I should take it, I'd surely lose it.

Vasilkov.—Thanks. I'll pay you good interest.

Telyatev.—Nothing but champagne. I won't take any other interest.

Vasilkov.—But just the same, we'll fight that duel, because you're flirting with my wife.

Telyatev.—Believe me, it's not worth it. If she's a good woman, then nothing'll come from my flirting with her, except that I'll have a little diversion. And if she's a bad woman, then it's not worth while to fight a duel over her.

Vasilkov.—But what shall I do then, if that's the case? (*In despair.*) What shall I do?

Telyatev.—Throw her over, that's all.

Vasilkov.—I was so happy, and she pretended so to love me! Just think! For me, a provincial, an unlucky, clumsy brute, the caresses of such a beautiful girl! Why, it was paradise! And all at once, she is betraying me! My heart is torn, my legs give way, my life is nothing to me; she's deceiving me.

Telyatev.—Kill *her*, then: why make me suffer for it?

Vasilkov.—Because you've corrupted her. She was good, by nature; but in this bottomless pit of yours a woman can lose everything, honor and conscience and all sense of shame. And you are the most corrupt of all. No, no, take up your pistol, or I'll kill you with a chair.

Telyatev.—The devil take you anyway. You make me tired. Let's shoot! (*He goes over to the pistols, and listens at the door.*) Listen; before we die, let's try to hide ourselves behind the stove!

Vasilkov.—No, no, shoot!

Telyatev (*Takes him by the shoulder*).—Quieter, quieter, for God's sake! (*Leads him forcibly behind the stove, towards the exit.* KUCHUMOV *and* LYDIA *come in.*)

SCENE X

VASILKOV, TELYATEV, KUCHUMOV *and* LYDIA

Kuchumov (*Sings*).—"*In mia mano alfin tu sei.*"

Lydia.—Good-bye, daddy dear.

Kuchumov (*Sings*).—Kiss me! Your kisses . . . *Addio, mia carina!*

Lydia.—Of course I will, daddy dear. (*She kisses him.* TELYATEV *and* VASILKOV *come out from behind the stove.*) Ah! (*She draws back.*)

Kuchumov (*Shaking his finger*).—Come, come, come, gentlemen! As an old friend I've the right. *Honni soit qui mal y pense.*

Vasilkov (*Points to the door*).—Get out! Tomorrow I'll send my second to you.

Kuchumov.—No, no you don't, young man. I won't fight with you: my life's too valuable to Moscow to match it against yours, which is possibly quite worthless.

Vasilkov.—Then I'll kill you. (*He goes over to the table.*)

Kuchumov.—Come! Young man! Come! That's not the way to joke, that's not the way, young man! (*He goes out quickly.*) (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *comes in.*)

SCENE XI

VASILKOV, TELYATEV, LYDIA, *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What's all this noise for?

Vasilkov.—Take back your daughter. Our account's balanced. I return her to you as immoral as when I took her from you. She has complained that she's changed her high-sounding name for my humble one; but I'm rightfully the one to complain now, for she has stained my simple but honorable name. When she married me, she said she didn't love me; but I, after living with her only a week, despise her. She came to me penniless, I paid for her trousseau and her finery; let her balance it against the fact that I have enjoyed her caresses for a week, although not I alone.

Lydia.—Ha, ha, ha! What a tragedy!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What do you mean, what do you mean! You've had some misunderstanding. There are times when people separate, but it's always peaceably, conventionally.

Vasilkov (*To* TELYATEV).—My friend, don't desert me; I must make a few arrangements. Here's your money, take it! I wanted to earn you a big interest on it, to pay you for your goodness. Take it! (*He gives the money to* TELYATEV, *who puts it carelessly in his pocket.* LYDIA *looks fixedly at the money.*) I must make a few arrangements, write to my mother . . . I'll shoot myself. (*He drops his head on his breast.*)

Telyatev.—Stop, stop! Savva, you're making a fool of yourself. I have a friend who had two wives run away from him. What was he to do? Shoot himself twice? Come, Savva, look at me! Listen, I'm a sensible fellow; I can give you a lot of good advice. In the first place, don't think of having a duel in a room —that's not the proper way: The Petrovsky Park's the place for duels. In the second place, you and I'll have a good dinner first and then see what's to be done.

Vasilkov (*To* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA).—Take back your daughter quick, now! Take her!

Lydia.—She will, more quickly than you think. We ourselves wanted to go today. We've rented our old apartments, and we'll try not even to look out of our plate glass windows at this wretched hovel and its wretched inhabitant. You've played a comedy, and we've played a comedy. We have more money than you; but we're women, and women don't like to pay. I pretended that I loved you, I pretended with loathing. But I needed to have you pay our bills. I succeeded in it, and I'm satisfied. Did you appreciate my ability to play a part? With such an ability a woman will never come to ruin. Shoot yourself, do, and be quick about it! Telyatev, don't persuade him out of it. You'll free my hands, and the next time I won't make a mistake when I choose a husband, or a . . . Well, you know yourself what I mean. Good-bye! I only hope I'll never see you again. (*To her mother.*) Have you sent for the carriage?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, it's ready. (*She goes out*, LYDIA *following her.*)

Vasilkov.—Of course, everything's all over for me now.

Telyatev.—Why, how's that? Isn't there still something left for you in life?

Vasilkov.—No, it's all over. If I were wicked, as she is, I'd gnaw my fingers and beat my head on the wall; if I'd deceived her myself, I'd forgive her. But I'm a good, kind man; I trusted her, and she made sport so cunningly of my goodness of heart. Laugh at what you will, at my face, at my name—but at my goodness of heart! At this, that I loved her, that after every caress from her I'd sit by the hour in my study and cry from joy! My friend, it's not my self-respect that's been outraged, but my soul! My soul has been killed, it remains only to kill my body. (*He weeps.*)

Telyatev.—Listen to me! Please stop, or else I'll burst out crying too, and I'd cut a pretty figure! Stop, Savva, stop! Do as I ask you, if it's only for a few hours! You and I'll have dinner together and I'll decide what I'll give you to eat and drink.

Vasilkov (*Picks up a pistol and puts it in his pocket*).—My friend, what's that noise? (*He runs to the window.*) The carriage! They're driving off! (*Utterly crushed.*) Take my corpse whereever you please, until it lies somewhere under a bush outside of the city gates. (*He goes out.*)

ACT V

A boudoir in the Cheboksarovs' former apartment. On the right of the audience is a door into the hall; in the center, an entrance; on the left, a plate-glass window.

SCENE I

LYDIA, *in a morning negligee, is lying on a couch. Her Mother comes in.*

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Well, hasn't he come?

Lydia.—Not yet.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I've lost my head completely. What shall we do? A week ago, Kuchumov, instead of giving me what he had promised for the new establishment, gave me only six hundred and thirteen roubles, and that with such grimaces and contortions as if he were doing us God knows what kind of a favor. Another mountain of debts has heaped up on us. Don't forget, all the new furniture was sold by that evil genius of yours.

Lydia.—He promised to bring the money today without fail. I'm ashamed not to believe him when he's done father such a favor.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I'm not so sure that he has. Just today I received a letter from your father. He writes that he hasn't received any money at all, that he's sold the estate, and that now he's living with a friend himself. He writes me that he has very little money left to meet his debts with after the sale; and that he wants to use that to go into partnership with a certain Tartar or Bashkir, to start a koumiss* establishment.

Lydia.—Now I understand. Do you know who bought the estate?

Nadezhda Antonovna—Who?

Lydia.—Kuchumov. He promised to buy it and make me a present of it.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Hardly! Your father writes that a certain Yermolayev, an agent of Vasilkov's, made the largest offer at the sale. But isn't that Kuchumov now? (*She points towards the window.*)

Lydia.—It's ridiculous! It's impossible! You saw yourself that he borrowed money from Telyatev and promised big interest; and only people who're in straits give big interest. Besides, he's too stupid for that. We'll disturb ourselves much less if we don't mention him at all.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, of course.

Lydia.—I feel that I've disgraced myself by marrying him. I want to wipe out every memory of him from my mind. I'd return all of his gifts if they weren't so valuable. I'm having them all made over so that they'll look different.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I'll go and ask whether they've brought the carriage. I persuaded a certain carriage-maker to give it to us on credit; and I ordered them to put a coat of arms on it. We'll have to use cab-horses, but one must have one's own carriage. People can always tell a cab. (*She goes out.*)

Lydia.—Yes, experience is a great thing. I'm still very trustful; and when you're trustful, you may make an irretrievable mistake. (Andrey *comes in.*)

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* Fermented mares' milk, used as a health drink, at sanitariums.

Andrey.—Mr. Kuchumov.

Lydia.—Ask him in. (ANDREY *goes out.* KUCHUMOV *comes in.*)

SCENE II

LYDIA *and* KUCHUMOV

Kuchumov (*Kneeling and kissing* LYDIA'S *hand.*) "*Il segretto per esser felice . . .* "

Lydia.—What nonsense! Sit down, I must have a little talk with you.

Kuchumov.—What coldness! Why do you speak so, my child?

Lydia.—Please stop, I've had enough joking. Listen! You forced me to leave my husband; we're in debt. I'm ashamed to remind you about money, just as if you were keeping me. You forced the money on me yourself.

Kuchumov (*Sits down*).—You must either kill me outright or forgive my absent-mindedness. I'd just counted the money and put it in my pocket book to bring with me, when my wife suddenly came in. I tossed it into the desk drawer and locked it up. I talked a little with her, and so I forgot it. I'll bring it to you in half an hour.

Lydia.—But who bought father's estate.

Kuchumov.—Why, I did, of course.

Lydia.—He writes that an agent of Vasilkov's bought it.

Kuchumov.—Quite so. I gave my power of attorney to a certain Vasilkov, a merchant acquaintance of mine. I'm godfather to his son. He's not familiar with law, and so he transferred it to some one else. What a funny letter he sent me! I'll bring it to you in ten minutes. (*He rises and surveys the room. Sings.*) "*Io son ricco, tu sei bella.*" This is charming, and that's not so bad. What taste you have! We must have a little foliage here. I'll send a big palm and some tropical plants. Here, under the big palm, we'll hold our intimate conversations. I'll send it this very day. (*He sits down near to* LYDIA.)

Lydia (*Moving away*).—Well, when you bring us the money, I'll call you daddy again, and perhaps I'll fall in love with you.

Kuchumov (*Sings*).—"*Io son ricco, tu sei bella.*" You can't doubt my honor, so there's no reason for putting off your love to another time, my darling.

Lydia.—Do you think so? I'm in a bad mood today. I've no taste for love. I've been hearing about wealth for so long. My husband has mines of gold, you have mountains of gold, Telyatev's almost a millionaire, and Glumov says that he's grown suddenly rich. All my admirers praise my beauty, they all promise to shower me with gold, but neither my husband nor my worshippers want to lend me a paltry sum for pin-money. I've nothing to go riding in except a hired cab with two old nags.

Kuchumov.—That's terrible! But everything will be adjusted in half an hour. I'm to blame, I alone am to blame; I admit it.

Lydia.—I'm not living with my husband; you come to see me every day at a certain hour. What will people think? What are they going to say?

Kuchumov.—If there's food for gossip, of course there'll be gossip, however carefully you conduct yourself. In my opinion, if we must endure condemnation, then we'd better deserve it. It's a terrible thing to endure unjust condemnation, *idol mio.* But in half an hour, I tell you . . . well . . . obstacles may turn up: unavoidable payments; there may be a shortage of money in the office. Well . . . in a day . . . or two . . . at the end of a week anyway, you'll have all, more than you can wish for.

Lydia (*Rises*).—In a week! In ten minutes, all of it! Do you hear what I'm saying? Otherwise I'll order them not to admit you.

Kuchumov.—Ten minutes! I'm not Mercury, I can't fly so quickly. Business may detain me.

Lydia.—No one can detain you. The money's in your drawer, the letter's probably in another one. Good-bye!

Kuchumov.—I'll justify myself in your eyes, but I won't forgive you for treating me so for a long time. (*Shakes his finger at her.*) Not for a long time. (*He goes out.*)

Lydia.—Now's when my self-confidence begins to waver. I'm fairly shivering. Is Kuchumov deceiving me or not? (*With decision.*) He's deceiving me. He hasn't fulfilled one of his promises yet. What shall I do then? Despair and suicide, or . . . again suicide, only slow and torturing . . . (ANDREY *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Telyatev.

Lydia (*Thoughtfully*).—Show him in. (ANDREY *goes out.* TELYATEV *comes in.*)

SCENE III

LYDIA AND TELYATEV

Lydia.—Why haven't we seen you for so long? What's become of you?

Telyatev.—A man who has no business always has a lot to keep him busy. Why are you so serious? Oh, oh, oh! (*Looks at her fixedly.*)

Lydia.—What is it? What's the matter with you?

Telyatev.—A little wrinkle, right there on your forehead; a little tiny one, but still it's a wrinkle.

Lydia (*Frightened*).—It can't be.

Telyatev.—Look in the glass. Oh, oh, oh! At your age! Aren't you ashamed!

Lydia (*In front of the glass*).—That's enough! I'm tired of you.

Telyatev.—You mustn't think, Lydia Yuryevna. Be especially careful not to think. God preserve you from it! That's the way women of our class keep their beauty, by never thinking.

Lydia.—Ah, Ivan Petrovich, in my position it's easy to grow old and grey. How can I keep from thinking? Who's going to think for me?

Telyatev.—What more then do you want? Your position's secure; you're living alone in a magnificent apartment, perfectly free; you're rich, you told me so yourself; you have a lot of admirers; your husband doesn't exist for you.

Lydia (*Joyfully*).—Did he shoot himself?

Telyatev.—No, he changed his mind.

Lydia.—I'm sorry. Can I trust you with a secret.

Telyatev.—Surely.

Lydia.—Do you know how to keep them?

Telyatev.—No, I don't. But I know how to lose them right away, that's better. Tell it to one ear, and the very same minute it'll fly out of the other; while by the end of an hour, even if you should kill me, I shouldn't remember any secret at all.

Lydia.—Our affairs are in a very bad state. We simply haven't a thing to live on.

Telyatev.—It's a rare family that doesn't have such a secret.

Lydia.—Listen! You're intolerable. I left my husband because . . . No, I'm ashamed.

Telyatev.—Ah, what are you saying! Go on! Do I enbarass you? I'm such a queer sort of man that I never embarassed a woman in my life.

Lydia.—Well then, you don't embarrass me either. I left my husband because I was relying on Kuchumov. He promised to give me a loan of forty thousand.

Telyatev.—Ah, he's a rare one! But why not a loan of eighty thousand?

Lydia.—Why, could he?

Telyatev.—Of course! He could give you two hundred—that is, he could promise it to you—but how could he pay it! It's not often that he could find as much as ten rubles in his pocket.

Lydia.—You're lying about him. He has bought my father's estate, it's worth a great deal; and I saw him give mamma six hundred rubles myself.

Telyatev.—I can't say anything about the estate, but I know where he got his six hundred rubles. He scoured Moscow for five days looking for them. At last they gave them to him for thirty days and took his note of hand for two thousand. I thought he was looking for money in order to pay your husband, to whom he'd lost this amount at cards long ago at the club and hadn't paid.

Lydia (*In despair*).—You're killing me!

Telyatev.—Why? He's a very good fellow. Don't disturb yourself. We all love him, only he's very forgetful. Once he did have a large fortune, to be sure, but he often forgets that he's spent it all. And it's very easy for him to forget. Now he has dinners and balls and suppers and magnificent carriages: only it all belongs to his wife; and everything's been made over to her nieces, while she's still alive. But they don't give him more than ten rubles of his own to spend at the club. On his name day, and on holidays, they give him fifty and sometimes a hundred rubles. Just take a look at him then! He comes into the club, sits down at the end of the table where his truffles and champagne and oysters are waiting for him. And how hard he is to please! He tires out all the servants, he keeps five waiters on the run. And the poor cooks come in for it too.

Lydia (*Growing pale*).—What shall I do? I'm so in debt.

Telyatev.—That's a desperate case, to be sure! Who isn't in debt nowadays?

Lydia.—Telyatev! You have an immense fortune, take pity on me! Don't let me be ruined! (Telyatev *drops his head.*)

Telyatev, uphold the honor of our family. I can grow to love you. You're good, kind. (TELYATEV *drops his head still lower.*) Jean, I'm perishing, save me! If you'll help me out of this calamity, I'm yours. (*She lays both her hands on his shoulders and bows her head.*)

Telyatev.—That's very dear of you, and I'd be perfectly happy; but, Lydia Yuryevna, I'm no longer a free man.

Lydia (*Looking him full in the eyes.*) Why? Are you going to be married, or married already?

Telyatev.—Neither the one nor the other, but tomorrow they're going to take me to the Voskresensky Gates.*

Lydia.—How so?

Telyatev.—They'll just take me there and drop me in.

Lydia.—It's impossible. Where's your money? I know that you gave my husband a loan.

Telyatev.—What has that to do with it? Should I be sparing of other people's money?

Lydia.—But haven't you any of your own?

Telyatev.—I can't remember when I ever did. Yesterday I discovered that I owe about three hundred thousand. Everything you ever saw me possess, everything, belongs to some one else: the horses, the carriages, my lodgings, my clothes. None of it is paid for. And at first they made out bills for it all against me; then promissory notes; then they sent me notices of proceedings; then they got writs of execution. I got whole heaps of money from the usurers. All my creditors will appear before me tomorrow; it will be an impressive picture. The furniture, the carpets, the mirrors, the pictures were all rented, and now they'll carry them off. The carriage and the horses came from Vakhansky. The tailor's going to take my clothes tomorrow before it's light! I'm sure my creditors 'll have a good laugh. Of course I'll receive them in my dressing gown; that's my only possession. I'll offer them each a cigar, I still have a dozen or so left. They'll look at me and my empty walls and say, "Go and enjoy yourself in the wide world, Ivan Petrovich." One of them's angry on account of his wife. That fellow will probably keep me a couple of months in the pen until he gets tired of paying my board. Well then, they'll let me out, and again I'll be free, and again there'll be credit, because I'm a good fellow and have eleven aunts and grandmothers still living, whose heir I am. You won't believe how much legal paper I've used up writing promissory notes. If you sold it by the hundred weight, you'd get more money than I'm worth.

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* A debtor's prison is located near the Voskresensky Gates in Moskow.

Lydia.—And you're so calm over it?

Telyatev.—Why should I worry? My conscience is as clean as my pockets. My creditors have gotten their money from me long ago three times over, and they're suing me just to keep up the forms.

Lydia.—Where, where can I get money—that is, big money, lots of it? Can it be that no one has it?

Telyatev.—Why, most certainly!

Lydia.—But who *does* have it then?

Telyatev.—The business people, who don't throw it away foolishly!

Lydia.—Don't they throw it away? It's a pity!

Telyatev.—It surely is a pity! Money's grown more sensible now. It's all going to the business class, and not to us. But before, money was more silly. Here's precisely the kind of money you want.

Lydia.—What kind?

Telyatev.—Fairy gold. All of my money was fairy gold. I couldn't keep it in my pocket to save me. Do you know, I've just recently discovered why my money and yours is fairy gold. It's because we didn't earn it ourselves. Money earned by toil—that's sensible money. It lies where it's put. We beckon to it, but it doesn't come. It says, "I know the kind of money you need. I won't come to you." And no matter how you beg it to, it won't stir. It's a blow to your pride to have it scorn your acquaintance.

Lydia.—I'll turn actress.

Telyatev.—One needs talent for that, Lydia Yuryevna.

Lydia.—I'll be a provincial actress.

Telyatev.—Where's the profit in that? You'll win over the miller Tulumbasov, or at the most, a middle class landowner. What kind of career is that?

Lydia.—Telyatev, help me, I must have money!

Telyatev.—Then come over here a minute. (*He leads her over to the window.*) Do you see?

A little house
Stands by the wall.
Its little windows
Watch us all.

That's where you'll find your money.

Lydia.—Do you mean my husband has it?

Telyatev.—That's what I mean. He's not only richer than all of us, but he's so rich that it makes your head swim just to think of it. Now-a-days it's not the man with a fortune that's rich, but the man who can acquire one. If your husband has three hundred thousand in cash now, you can guarantee that in a year he'll have a million, and in five years, five.

Lydia.—It's impossible. I don't believe you. Go away. He sent you to me himself.

Telyatev.—Then just listen. When you left him, we went to dine at the Troitsky restaurant. He wouldn't look at the people, nor eat his soup nor drink his wine. Some queer-looking people came up to him and whispered something, and he seemed to wake up a little. Suddenly they brought him a telegram; he read it through and his eyes began to shine. "No," he said, "it's foolish to shoot myself. Let's have a little spree now. Congratulate me." Well, I congratulated him; we kissed each other and started out to tour the town. I presented him to a few of my old acquaintances among the ladies, that is, not old ones but former ones,—and they're still pretty young.

Lydia (*Looking out of the window*).—Wait! What kind of a carriage is that? Lace! Could mamma have bought it for me? How charming, how luxurious!

Telyatev.—No, you're wrong. That's the carriage he gave to a lady-friend of mine, with the horses too, and he's engaged such a coachman as one might exhibit in the Zoological Gardens. She's just going away from the house, the blonde, but she has eyes like bachelor's buttons.

Lydia.—Ah! I'm going to faint! That's not a carriage, that's a dream! One might die from happiness, sitting in that carriage. What's come over me? I hate him, and somehow I'm jealous too. I'd like to kill that blonde. Her nose is too small and she turns it up at that.

Telyatev.—That's not jealousy, but envy.

Lydia.—Is he in love?

Telyatev.—With what? The carriage?

Lydia.—No, the blonde woman.

Telyatev.—Why should he be? When you give money to people you love, you'll spend altogether too much. Do you want to hear what your husband told me about himself?

Lydia.—Tell me!

Telyatev.—He's studied a great deal of . . . something.

—I've forgotten the name already. There are lots of sciences, Lydia Yuryevna, which you and I have never even heard of.

Lydia.—Go on, go on!

Telyatev.—He went abroad and studied methods of railroad construction. Then he returned to Russia and took over a little section from a contractor. He lived with the workmen himself, in barracks, and Vasily Ivanych with him. Do you know Vasily Ivanych? He's pure gold, not a servant.

Lydia.—Oh, quit!

Telyatev.—The first contract was successful; he took a somewhat larger one, and then still a larger. Now he's received a telegram. "Well," says he, "Vasily, I won't come to terms for less than a million." And I say, "Then don't." It's all the same to me. I don't lose anything by it.

Lydia.—I'm dying!

Telyatev.—What's the matter?

Lydia (*Lies down on the divan*).—Call mamma! Call her quick!

Telyatev (*In the doorway*).—Nadezhda Antonovna! (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *comes in.*)

SCENE IV

LYDIA, TELYATEV *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Lydia.—Mamma, for heaven's sake!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—What's the matter with you, Lydia? What's the matter with you, my child?

Lydia.—For heaven's sake, mamma, go to my husband and call him here. Tell him I'm dying.

Telyatev.—Take my horses, Nadezhda Antonovna, and go quickly!

Nadezhda Antonovna (*Looks at her daughter carefully*).—Yes, yes, I see; you're ill. I'll go this minute. (*She goes out.*) (ANDREY *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Glumov.

Lydia (*Who has risen*).—Shall I receive him or not? I still don't know whether my husband will come. A drowning man catches at a straw. (*To* ANDREY.) Show him in! (ANDREY *goes out.* GLUMOV *comes in.*)

SCENE V

LYDIA, TELYATEV *and* GLUMOV

Glumov.—What's the matter with you?

Lydia.—I'm not feeling well. But how goes it with you? I heard you'd grown wealthy.

Glumov.—Not yet, but I have hopes. I've taken a very profitable position.

Telyatev.—And one to which you're quite equal.

Glumov.—A lucky chance, nothing more. A certain elderly lady's been looking for a long time for a . . . I don't mean an administrator, but a . . . whatever you might call it!

Lydia.—Un secretaire intime?

Glumov.—Oui, madame! She needed an honest man, some one to whom she could entrust . . .

Telyatev.—Both herself and her money?

Glumov.—Practically that. She has houses, estates, a pile of business affairs: how could she manage it all! She's quarreled with her heirs. I'm trying to turn it all into capital, for doing which I have complete authority. I receive a rather large per cent of it as my commission.

Telyatev.—She's a noble, trusting woman. Confess, Glumov, you'll find few like her.—That's so, isn't it?

Glumov.—Yes, she must be the only one left. I know them all, every one.

Telyatev.—We were just remarking that fairy gold had ceased to exist, but you're more fortunate than we: you have found it.

Glumov.—But I looked for it so long and so diligently.

Lydia.—So now you have a lot?

Glumov.—A lot! That's a relative idea, you know. It would be only a little for a Rothschild, but for me it's sufficient.

Lydia.—Loan me twenty thousand.

Glumov.—People don't loan money to pretty young women, because it's indelicate to remind them when they forget their debt, and it's still more indelicate to start a prosecution. One must either refuse them politely, or make them a present of it.

Lydia.—Well, as you please: only give it to me.

Glumov.—Excuse me, I can't now. Do you remember, you said that you'd never give me your hand to kiss? I'm a spiteful fellow.

Lydia.—Kiss away.

Glumov.—It's too late now, or rather it's too early. If you'll wait a year for me, I'll come to kiss your hand. Tomorrow I'm setting out for Paris with my trustful patron. She can't keep account of her money, whether it's rubles or francs. I'm going to be her cashier. She suffers from asthma and general obesity. Even here, the doctors don't give her more than a year to live, while in Paris, with trips to the watering-places, and with the help of modern medicine, she'll die quicker. You see, I haven't any time to lose. For a year I must watch over my invalid tenderly, but afterwards I can reap the fruits of my labors; I may even spend quite a lot, possibly with your co-operation, if you choose.

Lydia.—You're a spiteful, spiteful man!

Glumov.—You used to like that characteristic in me. We're similar in that respect.

Lydia.—Yes, until you went beyond all bounds, but now good-bye!

Glumov.—Good-bye! I'm leaving with the sweet hope that in a year you'll be missing me, that you'll appreciate me, and we'll probably meet like kindred.

Lydia.—Enough, enough!

Glumov.—*Au revoir!*

Telyatev.—Good-bye, Glumov. A good journey to you! Remember me when you're in Paris. My shadow still wanders there at every street crossing.

Glumov.—Good-bye, Telyatev. (*He goes out.*) (NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *comes in with some medicine bottles; behind her, a maid with pillows; she lays them on the divan and goes out.*)

SCENE VI

LYDIA, TELYATEV *and* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You absolutely must lie down, Lydia. You're tiring yourself out for nothing, my dear! I can see from your face that you're suffering terribly. I told your husband you were. He'll be here immediately. Here are your smelling salts and the drops that have always helped you.

Lydia (*Lies down on the pillows*).—How did he receive you?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Very politely, although he was rather cold. He asked if you were seriously ill, and I told him you were. Why are you laughing, Ivan Petrovich?

Telyatev.—I can't remain indifferent. I must either laugh or cry.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—You don't know Lydia's nature or her constitution: she's so nervous, so nervous. . . . She's been so since her childhood.

Telyatev.—Pardon me, indeed I don't understand Lydia Yuryevna's constitution; it's a mystery to me.

Lydia.—Ivan Petrovich, you're such a chatterbox; you make me laugh.

Nadezhda Antonovna.—Yes, perhaps you actually will make her laugh, and then he'll come in.

Telyatev.—Shall I hide?

Lydia (*Languidly*).—No, stay! I like to see you so much; you give me strength.

Telyatev.—If you like to see me, I'll not only stay, but I'll stand opposite you as though I were screwed there. Look at me all you choose, only let me play merely a walking part in this comedy. (ANDREY *comes in.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Vasilkov.

Lydia (*In a weak voice*).—Show him in. (ANDREY *goes out.* NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA *straightens the pillows,* TELYATEV *holds his handkerchief up to his eyes,* VASILKOV *comes in.*)

SCENE VII

LYDIA, TELYATEV, NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, *and* VASILKOV

Vasilkov (*Bowing to them all in general*).—Did you send for me?

Lydia.—I'm dying.

Vasilkov.—In that case, you need either a doctor or a priest, and I'm neither the one nor the other.

Lydia.—You deserted us.

Vasilkov.—On the contrary, you deserted me, and without even saying good-bye, as one should.

Lydia.—So I must say good-bye?

Vasilkov.—If you wish to.

Lydia.—In Russian, to say good-bye, means to ask for forgiveness.

Vasilkov.—Then ask it.

Lydia.—I'm to blame only for leaving you without considering my resources; you're to blame for everything else.

Vasilkov.—We're even then: I was to blame, and you left me. There's nothing more to discuss. Good-bye!

Lydia.—Ah no, please stay!

Vasilkov.—What do you want?

Lydia.—You're not paying anything for your fault, but I may pay cruelly for mine. I'm head over ears in debt. They'll put me in the Moscow prison along with shopkeepers' wives.

Vasilkov.—So that's what you're afraid of? That's the kind of dishonor that terrifies you? Don't be afraid! Honorable people fall into that prison too, and there's a way out of it. It's well to fear the Moscow prison, but one should fear more that bottomless pit which is called corruption, in which perish both name and honor and the good looks of a woman. You're afraid of prison, but you're not afraid of that gulf from which there's no return to an honorable course!

Lydia.—Who gave you permission to speak so here?

Vasilkov.—Who permits the seeing to lead the sightless out into the road? Who permits the wise to protect the foolish? Who permits the learned to teach the ignorant?

Lydia.—You haven't the right to teach me.

Vasilkov.—Yes, I have, the right of compassion.

Lydia.—And you dare to speak about compassion! You see your wife in a position like this and you don't want to pay a trifling debt for her!

Vasilkov.—I don't throw my money away, no indeed I don't!

Nadezhda Antonovna.—I don't understand your philosophy. It's all news to me, news from the moon. And do you throw money away when you pay your wife's debts?

Vasilkov.—How is she a wife of mine? And didn't she say herself that she had more money than I?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—She *said* so. What can't a woman say when she's angry. However greatly a wife offends her husband, still one ought to pity the wife more. We're so weak, so nervous, every quarrel costs us so dearly. A hot-tempered woman is quick to act foolishly, and as quick to change her mind.

Vasilkov.—But she doesn't say that she's changed her mind.

Lydia.—I have, and I'm sorry I acted so.

Vasilkov.—Isn't it late for that?

Nadezhda Antonovna.—No, no! She may become infatuated, but she will never allow herself to fall.

Vasilkov.—I know she hasn't. Your servants have received a great deal more money from me than from you. But I don't know what saved her from falling, honor or Kuchumov's lack of money. (*To* LYDIA.) What is it you want?

Lydia.—To live with you again.

Vasilkov.—It's impossible. You change your mind so quickly that perhaps tomorrow you'd take it into your head to leave me. One disgrace is enough for me. I don't want two.

Lydia.—But you ought to save me.

Vasilkov.—How shall I save you? There's only one way: I'll offer you honest work, and compensation for it.

Lydia.—What kind of work, and what kind of compensation?

Vasilkov.—Come and be my housekeeper. I'll give you a thousand rubles a year.

Lydia (*Rises from the divan*).—Leave this room! (VASILKOV *goes out.*)

Telyatev (*Taking his handkerchief from his eyes*).—Now that you've recovered, I can stop crying.

Lydia.—Ah, this is no time for joking! Run, overtake him, bring him back at any cost. (TELYATEV *runs out.*)

Nadezhda Antonovna.—How stubborn he is! How unbearable! A man from decent society couldn't act so. He'd rather kill his wife than make such a proposition to her. (VASILKOV *and* TELYATEV *return.*)

Lydia.—Excuse me, I didn't understand you. Tell me, what does "housekeeper" mean, and what are her duties?

Vasilkov.—Very well, I'll explain. But if you don't accept my offer, I won't come back again. A housekeeper's a woman who looks after all of the work in a house. That's not humiliating for any one. And these are her duties: My old mother who lives in the country on my estate is an excellent mistress of the house. You'll go there and serve your apprenticeship under her. She'll teach you everything: how to salt mushrooms and make home-brewed wine and jam. She'll turn over to you the keys of the store-house, and of the cellar, and she'll just oversee your work. I need just such a woman. I'm always out on the road.

Lydia.—Horrible, horrible!

Vasilkov.—Shall I finish?

Lydia.—Go on.

Vasilkov.—When you've learned housekeeping to perfection, I'll take you to the capital of the province, where you must dazzle all of the provincial ladies with your gowns and your society manners. I shan't spare money for it, but I won't run over my budget. And I need that kind of a wife too, in view of my expanding interests. Later, if you're amiably inclined towards me, I'll take you to Petersburg; we'll hear Patti, I'll pay as much as a thousand rubles for a box. In Petersburg I have business relations with very great personages. I'm big and clumsy myself and I need a wife who can establish a salon where one might receive even a minister and not be ashamed. You have all the qualities necessary for this, only you must rid yourself of a few mannerisms that you've caught from Telyatev and the rest.

Telyatev.—But how should I know that such a brilliant future lay before Lydia Yuryevna—from a country cellar to a Petersburg salon?

Vasilkov (*Looking at his watch*).—Do you agree to my proposition or not? Only remember that first of all you must be a housekeeper, and for a considerable time.

Lydia.—Have mercy on me, spare my pride! I'm a lady, a lady from my head to my feet. Make me a little concession.

Vasilkov.—None whatsoever! Why should I spare your pride, when you didn't spare my simplicity of soul, my good-heartedness? And now I offer you the vocation of housekeeper because I love you.

Lydia.—Just change the word, then; it's harsh for my tender ears.

Vasilkov.—No, it's a good word.

Lydia.—I must think it over.

Vasilkov.—Think all you want to.

Telyatev.—Ah, if some one would only take me for a housekeeper! (Andrey *comes in.*)

Andrey.—The police commissioner wants to confiscate your property.

Lydia and Nadezhda Antonovna.—Ah, ah! Oh, oh! (Lydia *hides her face in the pillows.*)

Telyatev.—Why are you frightened? Console yourself. Yesterday they confiscated the furniture of two of my friends, today they've taken yours, tomorrow it's mine, and the day after tomorrow it'll be your Kuchumov's turn. It's a regular epidemic now.

Lydia (*To her husband*).—Save me from disgrace! I agree to everything! What can I do? I wanted to shine like an ever-radiant star, but you want to make me a meteor that flashes for a moment and dies out in the marsh! But I agree, I agree! I implore you, save me! (Vasilkov *goes out with* Andrey. Andrey *returns.*)

Andrey.—Mr. Kuchumov.

Lydia.—I think I'll receive him.

Telyatev.—Do!

Lydia (*To* ANDREY).—Show him in! (ANDREY *goes out.* KUCHUMOV *comes in, and later* VASILKOV.)

SCENE VIII

LYDIA, NADEZHDA ANTONOVNA, TELYATEV, KUCHUMOV, *and later* VASILKOV

Kuchumov (*Humming*).—"*Io son ricco* . . . . " What's the trouble?

Lydia.—They're confiscating our property. Did you bring the forty thousand?

Kuchumov.—"*Io son ricco* . . . " No; just imagine what a misfortune's befallen me! (VASILKOV *comes in and stops in the doorway.*) My servant, whom I loved like a son, has robbed me of everything and run off, most likely to America.

Telyatev.—I'm very sorry for your servant! He couldn't reach Zvenigorod on what he stole from you, let alone America.

Kuchumov.—Don't joke, I don't like it. I've sent out telegrams on all the high roads. They'll probably catch him soon and recover the money, and then I'll supply you, my child.

Telyatev.—He couldn't have stolen everything; he must have left you a little.

Kuchumov.—Of course! I never go out of the house without a thousand roubles.

Vasilkov.—Then give me the six hundred you owe me at cards.

Kuchumov.—Ah! Are you here? That's very fortunate. I've been wanting to square accounts with you for a long time. A debt of honor's my first care. (*He takes out his wallet.*) What nonsense is this? Probably I put it in the wrong place, in my left pocket by mistake. Ah, I've put on the wrong coat! But anyway you can get the money from Nadezhda Antonovna.

Vasilkov.—Very well. Lydia Yuryevna, I've paid your debts. You must go to the country.

Lydia.—Whenever you please.

Vasilkov.—I'm going tomorrow. Get ready!

Lydia (*Gives her hand to her husband*).—Thank you for giving me a whole day to cry freely in. I have much to weep over: over the ruined dreams of my whole life, over my mistake and my humiliation! I must weep for that which can never return. My goddess of carefree happiness has fallen from her pedestal, and in her place stands the rude idol of labor and industry, whose name is budget. Ah, how sorry I am for those poor, tender creatures, those dear merry girls! They won't find elegant, extravagant husbands any more. Oh, airy beings, give up your dreams of impossible happiness, cease thinking of those who elegantly squander money, and marry those who earn their money in coarse fashion and call themselves business people.

Telyatev.—How can we idlers bear to hear that?

Kuchumov (Sings).—"*Io son ricco** . . ."

Telyatev.—It's not true. *Noi siamo poveri*† . . . .

Lydia.—There's another sacrifice I'm enduring for you.

Vasilkov.—I don't want sacrifices.

Lydia.—I see that it's Greek against Greek. Very well, I submit. I accept your offer, because I find it profitable.

Vasilkov.—But remember, I won't run over my budget.

Lydia.—Oh, that budget of yours!

Vasilkov.—Only fairy gold knows no budget.

Telyatev.—You're speaking the sacred truth; I'll say even more, you're repeating my words.

Vasilkov (*To* TELYATEV).—Good-bye, my dear fellow. I'm sorry for you from the bottom of my heart. Tomorrow you'll be without shelter and food.

Telyatev.—Don't you want to make me a loan? No, no, don't. It would be a complete loss, a complete loss. Moscow's a city where Kuchumov and I can't come to ruin, Savva. We'll have credit and honor shown to us when we haven't even a kopek. For a long time to come, every merchant will count it a joy to have us sup and drink champagne at his expense. Of course, there are the tailors: they have little respect for one. But one can wear an old cloak and an old hat with such dignity that they'll make way for you from afar. Good-bye, friend Savva! Don't pity us. Virtue's respected even in rags. (*He and* KUCHUMOV *embrace each other.* LYDIA *goes timidly up to* VASILKOV, *lays her hand on his shoulder and bows her head.*)

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* I am rich.

† We are poor.

TABLEAU

CURTAIN

SOME STORIED PARENTS

By Ella K. Jelliffe

As a rule parents are rather subsidiary characters in literature. Very properly they occupy the background of the canvas, while youth—buoyant, hopeful, forward-looking youth, standsout prominently. In the passage of the years it is not so much the status of parents, real or fictional, that has changed, but parents themselves have altered. They seem to have become a different kind of being from the parents of old. They are no longer simple-minded, and certainly they are far from being single-minded. Parentage seems to be the least of their problems; they are much too busy preserving their own identity and pursuing their own individual ways, to act the autocratic, dogmatic, or devoted parents of old, even if modern children, who have risen up and demanded the right of way, would permit the old-time dictation and arranging of their careers. Many books of the day depict youth who seem to have no sense of indebtedness to their parents for the gift of life. Some of these, in an excess of candor, frankly state that they do not consider life a gift at all; it is just an accident, and therefore undeserving of any filial gratitude, unless it be to God or Nature.

Consequently, in some of the new books, parents *per se*, seem crowded out of the picture altogether, and so we must turn to the old books if we would see them in their glory, or at least in such a conspicuous place as that according the Donor or Benefactor in old Italian masterpieces.

> The old books, the old books, the books
> of long ago,
> Who ever felt Miss Austen tame, or called
> Sir Walter slow?

In these fathers and mothers of old, parenthood was a sort of knighthood, entailing, to be sure, considerable *noblesse oblige*, but receiving in return much filial love and honor.

Let us, then, begin with Homer and there find our first exponent of a parent. Penelope has just heard of the departure of Telemachus in search of his father. "Her knees were loosened where she stood, and her heart melted within her, and long time was she speechless, and lo, her eyes were filled with tears and the voice of her utterance was stayed. And at the last she said,

"'Henchman, wherefore I pray thee is my son departed? There is no need that he should go abroad on swift ships that serve men for horses on the sea, and that cross the great wet waste. Is it that even his own name may no more be left upon earth?'"

According to the old regime that "Men must work and women must weep," Telemachus, who had set himself a filial task, was up and doing, while upon his mother "fell a cloud of consuming grief, so that she might no more endure to seat her on a chair, whereof there were many in the house, but there she crouched on the threshold of her well-builded chamber, wailing piteously, and her handmaids round her made low moan, as many as were in the house with her, young and old." Among them Penelope poured forth her lamentation that, having lost her noble lord, Ulysses, the storm-winds should now have snatched away her well-beloved son. She reproached her women that they did not rouse her from her couch when they knew of his going, saying "For had I heard that he was purposing this journey, verily he should have stayed here still, though eager to be gone, or have left me dead in the halls." Wise Telemachus! To flee secretly, about his legitimate business, from such a determined and strong-willed mother!

How eagerly we follow the old story and note the working of the mother's mind in her distress. First she thinks she will call Laertes, her aged father-in-law into her counsels and get him to rouse the people to follow her son and bring him back, but she is diverted from this course by her good nurse, who advises her not to trouble the old man, but to repair to the upper chamber and there pray to Pallas Athene for help and guidance. This she does, and in the quiet of this room, away from the worrisome wooers, she fasts and then prays for the safety of her son. "And as a lion broods all in fear among the press of men, when they draw the crafty ring around him, so deeply was she musing when deep sleep came over her." What would mankind do without prayer and sleep, blessed sentinels of soul and body! And in her sleep, the grieving mother heard a consoling voice say, "Sleepest thou, Penelope, stricken at heart? Nay, even the gods who live at ease suffer thee not to wail or be afflicted, seeing that thy son is yet to return; for no sinner is he in the eyes of the gods."

And so the story goes on until at last, with joy equal to the mother's, we hear the herald proclaim, "Verily, O Queen, thy son hath come out of Pylos," and we are present at the meeting when "wise Penelope came forth from her chamber . . . and cast her arms about her dear son, and fell aweeping, and kissed his face and both his beautiful eyes, and wept aloud and spake to him winged words: 'Thou art come, Telemachus, a sweet light in the dark, methought I should see thee never again, after thou hadst gone in thy ship to Pylos, secretly and without my will, to seek tidings of tht dear father. Come now, tell me, what sight thou didst get of him?'"

Isn't mother love a beautiful thing? And aren't we proud of this dear old Greek story-teller who makes this home-coming of the son a precursor of the return of "Odysseus of many counsels" to his faithful wife and to his old and sorrowing father?

Doubtless it has never once escaped the notice of a feminine reader that into the midst of his depiction of Penelope's maternal grief, Homer adroitly inserts the fact of her material prosperity. He speaks of "her well-builded chamber" and of her "many chairs" and this catering to Penelope's pride in her possessions delightfully human, and brings the mother closer to our hearts as, of course, the poet meant it to do.

From Homer it seems but a step to English Chaucer who, in his "Man of Law's Tale," presents to us wicked, murdering mothers, in striking contrast to his sweet and patient Constance, the loving and storm-tossed young mother of Maurice. As we read of the latter's trials and of her brave endurance, we are grateful to the story-teller for the happy ending.

Shakespeare's parents are striking but not particularly admirable: There are the cotentious Capulets and Montagues, whose emnity led to the tragic fate of Romeo and Juliet; the unvirtuous Gertrude, mother of Hamlet; the politic Polonius, poor Ophelia's father, that time-serving courtier whom Hamlet killed like a rat in a closet, and whom, when he had discovered his identity, the young prince addressed in this wise, "Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!" Then there's the cruel, jealous Leontes of *The Winter's Tale*, who ordered his infant daughter exposed on a desert shore that she might perish, and the weak, tyrannical Cymbeline, father of the lovely impulsive Imogen. But most wonderful of all is his Lear! Vain, rash, splenetic Lear, whose tragic end has the added pathos of drawing down to death an innocent victim, his true and loving daughter, Cordelia. Yet how deeply is our compassion aroused for the suffering old king "more sinned against than sinning." There is no more pathetic situation in the world than that of an old, dishonored parent, and it seems to me there is no more heart-rending passage in the whole mighty drama than Lear's words when he answers Cordelia's loving and respectful request, made to him when he has come out of his madness and discovered his daughter at his side, "Will't please your highness walk?" to which he replies,

"You must bear with me. Pray you now, forget and forgive; I am old and foolish."

The eternal tragedy of age! How poignant it is in this play of Shakespeare's. How much more poignant in that of Aeschylus, where Oedipus, self-blinded for his sins, leans on the filial love of his faithful Antigone. It is a coincidence that in both of these dramas, nature sympathizes with the human woe: In "Lear," the old king is maddened by the awful storm into which he is thrust by his unnatural daughters; and in the Greek drama, Oedipus perishes in the thunderstorm that racks the earth. It would seem that when human ties are riven asunder, Earth, the universal mother, grieves at the same time, and either breaks her bonds or clothes herself in darkness, as she did from the sixth to the ninth hour when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

The mind turns naturally from Shakespeare's Lear to Balzac's Pere Goriot, with his "passion for paternity" which was expressed not only in his life of self-abnegation for his daughters' sake, but in his wide and beautiful thought, "When I became a father I comprehended God." At one time, in his loneliness and distress, he exclaimed, "My life is an Arctic winter since their eyes no longer lighten up for me," and again this pathetic cry escapes him, "They let me see they were ashamed of me." Later he adds, "Have I not expiated the crime of loving them too well?" Then his generous nature reasserts itself and self-condemning, he declares, "The fault was mine. I taught them to tread me underfoot . . . I abdicated my rights. I neglected my duty." Yet when his last day on earth comes, he cannot help but moan, "I have given them all my life; they will not give me one hour today." And finally, the whole philosophy of his life finds vent in his expiring sigh, "To die . . . is not to see them."

It is Romain Rolland who pictures for us the universal mother in his war story, "Mother and Son." Annette exclaims, "You are all my sons. Happy and unhappy sons, you are wounding yourselves. But I clasp you all. Your first sleep, your last sleep, I rock in my arms. Sleep! I am the universal Mother." In her way she repeats Pere Goriot's cry, "I want my daughters.

I made them; they are mine." Annette says, "My son. The man whom I have made. My work. He is my equal." To Marc, her son, when ill and feverish, "she reappeared—the Mother. Her proud image and her silence, her life, full of trials and passions that were not profaned, that soul of hers, with its integrity and straightforwardness, her contempt for words, the depths of her uncompanioned solitude and that uncompromising will against which he had rebelled, which he had hated, which he blessed today, her inflexible law of truthfulness." It is small wonder that Marc cried out from his soul, "You are my father and my mother."

Turgenev, in his *Fathers and Children*, touches upon that ever-recurring struggle between two different generations. The Russian, in his great novel, depicts the political upheaval in his native land, and also the breaking ties between fathers and children. He eulogizes the fathers who are "permeated with love and poetry," and decries the philosophy of the children as opposed to human nature. Bazarov, the man of superhuman will, represents the new movement in politics, and it is with his filial relationship even more than with that of his friend Kirsanov, that the reader's interest chiefly lies. The parents of this young nihilist are simple-minded, unlearned people, old-fashioned and pious. They adore their clever son, but in their love for him is a large element of fear. The mother sees with a pang of sorrow that she is no longer necessary to her son, while he is still the light of her eyes. Both she and the father would fain make home pleasant to him, that he may be happy to come and to stay, but they no longer know how; he has grown far beyond them in his mental outlook. They cannot cope with him. They do not understand; and however softly they may walk in their endeavor not to annoy or irritate him, in their hearts they feel that he has grown out of their knowledge. Bazarov himself, when dying, all his great dreams unfulfilled, seems to have recognized the tragedy of this estrangement between parents and children, for he says to his friend, "Be kind to mother. People like them aren't to be found in your great world if you look by daylight with a candle." This dying message rather softens our hearts toward an unlovable character, and we go with the old parents to his tomb and bow there too in grief. But our grief is not so much for the untimely death and the futility of his ambitions, as for the heartache of the parents who had lost him, even before he died.

Butler, in *The Way of All Flesh*, refers also to this struggle between youth and age. He tells how George's father takes to wearing his best clothes whenever his son comes to stay with him, and how a certain fear is mixed with his fatherly pride. Fortunately, in this story, the mother is of different caliber. She feels none of this fear. She rejoices in the fact that her son is "pure and absolute perfection."

What a different matter have we in Meredith's *Richard Feveril.* Here the dogmatic, conventional Sir Austin endeavors to determine his son's life according to an infallible system of parental dictation. By this system the father hopes to develop his well, but not wisely, loved son from without instead of allowing him to grow naturally from within. The failure of this experiment makes the story—the tragedy. Sir Austin will not accept defeat; though Lucy dies and Richard is left a wreck, he still thinks there was virtue in his ridiculous, worldly system, and the reader lays down the book, willing to echo Lady Blandish's pettish exclamation, "Oh! How sick I am of theories and systems and the pretensions of men!"

In contrast to this foolish parent, how wise does Phillpot's Avisa Pomeroy, in *The Mother of the Man*, seem. This Dartmoor mother wisely, valiantly gave her erring son up to the law rather than hide him, so great was her desire to save his soul. Her relatives and neighbors thought her cruel; her son cursed her as he saw her disclosing his hiding-place to the deputies of the law. But Avisa's love for Ives was deep and tender. It was she who, night after night, left the light burning in the kitchen and placed little love notes on the table for her headstrong boy—"Supper in the oven, dear heart. Good night. Mother." In after years, so the story tells us, this very son, living rightly before God and man, said to a friend who praised him and likened him to his mother, "No son's worthy of such a woman as Avisa Pomeroy."

There's a sweet and touching story of Kathleen Norris's called simply *Mother*, with a beautiful poetic prelude. It describes a wonderful, old-fashioned mother of seven children. One of the characters of the book, a great man, says to the daughter (who is secretly a little fearful that her mother is not equal to the task of entertaining him), "It's been an inestimable privilege to meet her." He had noted her "unending effort, sacrifice, and pouring out of love and and sympathy and help" and he added, "It is something to thank God for, a mother like that."

Jane Austen's fathers and mothers, though delightful to read about, do not present themselves in shining colors. There's the cynical and indifferent father of the Bennet girls and the excessively foolish Mrs. Bennet. (How could she have such a fine daughter as Elizabeth and such a dear sweet one as Jane?) The conversation between Mr. Bennet and his daughter at the time of Lydia's castastrophe, satisfies one's sense of justice. Mr. Bennet, a silent, philosophic man, says to Elizabeth, when she tries to comfort him, "Who should suffer but myself? It has been my own doing and I ought to feel it," and when she replies, "You must not be too severe upon yourself," he retorts, "You may well warn me against such an evil. Human nature is so prone to fall into it. No, Lizzie, let me once in my life feel how much I have been to blame. I am not afraid of being overpowered by the impression. It will pass away soon enough."

Then there's the fussy valetudinarian, Mr. Woodhouse, the caste-bound and purse-proud General Tilney, unjust, egotistic, unhappy-tempered, a check on his children's spirits, and who, gentleman as he prided himself on being, could be rude, insolent, and uncivil to his invited guest, all because he had heard that Catharine Morland, whom he had wished his son to marry, belonged to poor and necessitous people. When, afterwards, the rumor was proved false and he found that Catharine would have 3000 a year, he graciously gave his consent to the marriage. His contemptible character is still further exemplified in the attitude he adopted toward his daughter upon her marriage. "Never had the General loved his daughter so well in all her hours of companionship, utility and patient endurance, as when he first hailed her, 'Your Ladyship.'" With Mrs. Allen we exclaim, "I really have not patience with the General," and we consider that we are being very gentle indeed. Dignified Mr. Morland and his placid wife we rather like. Each has a clean heart and a right spirit. Anne Elliot's father, the unloving Sir Walter, a vain, self-important and selfish man, is no great addition to the ranks of storied parents, so far as his character is concerned.

Naturally George Eliot's fathers and mothers are very real. Take, for example, Maggie Tulliver's mother, a simple-minded, unlettered woman, who, when Tom refused his sister a home under his roof, rose up from her comfortable place there, and said to Maggie, "My child! I'll go with you. You've got a mother," and the two of them walked forth to look for a place to lay their heads. Later, when Maggie, all compunction, exclaimed, "My poor, poor Mother! I was always naughty and troublesome to you. And now you might have been happy if it hadn't been for me," Mrs. Tulliver, with homely philosophy, sighed, "Eh, my dear, I must put up wi' my children,—I shall never have no more, and if they bring me bad luck, I must be fond on it!"

Then there's Mary Garth, who became "one of those strong, honest mothers of our race, such as Rembrandt once loved to paint." I am particularly fond of Mary Garth's father and mother, the gentle, high-minded, altruistic Caleb and the firm, prudent, practical Mrs. Garth. That scene where Caleb gets the management of the two estates and is so glad and proud about it, thinking he would have the coveted opportunity to carry out his ideas and get the estates into "good fettle," and put men into the right way with their farming, is very delightful, especially when the pleased wife replies to his eager words about the project in this way, "It will be a blessing to your children to have had a father who did such work; a father, whose good work remains, though his name be forgotten."

I do not recall any definite parent-portraits in Hardy's novels, though in a large way the novelist seems to make his characters exemplify the statement, "God is my Father, the Earth is my Mother." In one instance, he likens an extensive landscape to the many-breasted Cybele, stretched out at length.

I think it is Professor Phelps who calls our attention to the fact that the fate of Tess is primarily due to her enforced obedience to her parents' command to go to Trantridge, the home of the so-called D'Urbervilles. Here she meets with treachery and this is the first link in the chain of evil that finally chokes her. It would behoove parents to "be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Often, however, they sin unwittingly, as is the case with the father in Matthew Arnold's poem of *Sohrab and Rustum*. Here we sympathize with the frantic grief of the man who, unknowingly, killed his son in combat.

A very striking portrait of a parent is given in Bjornson's short story, *The Father*. Thord Overaas is a wealthy peasant, the big man of his community. When his son Finn is born, he goes to the priest and asks to have the child baptized alone and on a week-day, evidently considering him too superior to take his place with the common herd. Later, the father will not pay the boy's confirmation expenses until he is assured that Finn will rank Number One among the applicants at the altar. Finally, the banns of his marriage to the richest girl in the parish are trebly paid by the father, who wishes to finish his parental duties in the grand manner. And then, the pitiful climax, the breaking down of the father's arrogant spirit when, shortly before the wedding ceremony, the son is drowned. About a year afterward, the worn and white-haired father once more appears before the priest and silently places on the table half the price of his gard, a legacy for the poor, given in his son's name, and the wise old priest looks up and says to him, "I think your son has at last brought you a true blessing, Thord," and the father, with tears running down his cheeks, replies, "Yes, I think so myself."

Another proud but pitiful parent is little Paul Dombey's father, who stands out from many slighter fathers and mothers mentioned in the books of Dickens, such as the charmingly futile mother of David Copperfield; the fond and foolish Mrs. Nickleby; the faithful, loving mother of poor Barnaby Rudge; the sad and broken Dr. Manette, leaning on his faithful Lucie, who is another Antigone for filial virtue.

Lest my earlier strictures on parents of modern books seem too comprehensive and severe, let me interpolate here a paragraph or two from *Sorrel and Son*, a story of mutual devotion.

The father is disappointed in getting the position in Verity's Antique Shop. He comes back to his eleven year old son, Christopher.

"Father and son looked at each other.

'Well, my son, what about tea?'

Kit continued to look at his father; his eyes were very solemn.

'Mr. Verity's dead,' said the father, 'He died this morning . . . Well, what about tea?'

The boy's face seemed to flush slightly. His lips moved. It was as though he was aware of something in his father, something fine and piteous, a courage, something that made him want to burst into tears.

'Sorry, pater.'

His lips quivered.

'We—we'll have to make the best of it.'

And suddenly, and with a kind of fierceness, Sorrell caught his son and kissed him."

Then followed a heart-to-heart talk between them, in which both promised to stand by each other and to have no secrets, the one from the other.

"It was the beginning of the great comradeship between them, and for the first time for many months Sorrell felt a happiness that surprised him. The shock of the day's disappointment had passed. The human relationship suddenly realized between his boy and himself swallowed up the sense of defeat. His courage returned. As they wandered in the dusk of the Close under the darkening trees he felt Kit's nearness, a nearness of spirit as well as of body."

To go back to an old book, the Bible gives us many pictures of parents; one in particular calls forth our deepest compassion, that of David, whose lamentation has re-echoed through the ages, "O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (The death of a good son is grievous, but the death of a bad son is heart-rending.)

Another Bible parent, devoted, self-sacrificing and noble is Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who lent her son to the Lord. What a pretty, human touch there is in these verses: "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."

Then there's the story of Joseph. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors."

There is, too, the piteous story of Jephthah and his vow, whereby his daughter became his sacrifice unto the Lord:

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances, and she was his only child . . . When he saw her, he rent his clothes and said, 'Alas, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.'

"And she said unto him, 'My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth . . . '"

However mistaken we may think the man to make such a vow in the first place, we have to admire the nobility in both parent and child.

And so we might proceed, ad infinitum, to gather book parents: Barrie's exquisite *Margaret Ogilvie*, Harrison Rhode's *A Gift Book For My Mother*, in which he says, "Now that she who was the first source and fountain of my life is gone, I feel sometimes that I am left among strangers; there is no affection except the mother's for her child that can creep so close in every trivial, tender detail of life." That both of these books deal with real, instead of fictional parents, make them but dearer and sweeter.

In our books, therefore, we find fathers and mothers of various kinds: loving, devoted, anxious, dogmatic, domineering, strong-willed, severely just, indifferent, weak, foolish, ignorant, pitiable, proud, and tragic parents. But whatever the faults of individual parents, induced by nature or by circumstance, the office of parenthood remains, or should remain, intact and of high degree. It is the greatest thing in the world! To live up to its privileges and prerogatives is the summum bonum of life.

SONNET

By Louise Owen

Because the many verses I have flung
Have netted many little errant birds,
Caught them and tangled them in loops of words,
And caged them with their little song all sung,—
Because of this you beg a bird of me:
A robin with a copper-feather breast;
A thrush to loose his soul at your request,
Leaving a wraith of song for memory.

But the bright silken nooses that I wove
Of shining easy words, are shattered now,
And hand and arm that were so sure and strong
Have lost their skill and strength, being slaved by love;
But windless stirrings are in every bough,
And all the air about you reels with song.

DOOR MATS

By Stella Dunaway Whipkey

Characters

Marthy Higgins, *a plodding country girl of twenty-eight, kitchen-minded and loyal-hearted. Her dark eyes and hair in contrast with her blonde niece.*

Lomy Trent, *the sixteen year old niece, whose golden hair swirls about her face, and whose baby-blue eyes open innocently upon a world made pleasant by the devoted Marthy.*

Captain Blowsy, *a thin, shaky old soldier, with his trousers in his dusty boots, and his calico shirt open at the neck. When he removes his battered straw hat, his grey hair falls in wisps about his face.*

Andrew Potter, *the lover, a heavy-set dark-haired young farmer, whose black hair is slicked back from a low forehead, and his left hand adorned by a wide band ring on the little finger.*

Time—*A morning in August.*

Place—*Davis Mill, a small village at a bend in the creek, in the Ozarks.*

The Scene—Marthy's *kitchen is made pleasant by the perennial coat of whitewash, crisp white curtains, and bright rag rugs, on an immaculate pine floor. Through the open door at the right is seen a corner of the dining table; and the outside door, at the center, back, gives a view of the side gate—through which people come and go. Piled upon the chest of drawers, near the window at the left, is* Marthy's *materials for rugmaking, almost hiding from view a small clock. Her rocking chair is near, while the splint-bottomed chair stands primly by the cook-table, at the right. Propped against the water-bucket, on the cook-table, stands a neat wooden sign: "Door Mats." The cook-stove, in the far right corner, is polished, and the dishpan and other utensils on the wall about it are bright with constant use and careful scourings. On a bench at the right of the outside door is a nice cabbage beside a pail of potatoes, and above the bench is a shelf bearing six shining kerosene lamps, indi-*

cating the number of rooms in the house and the care which they receive from the faithful Marthy.

At rise of curtain, Marthy, *in a neat brown gingham dress and white apron, sits in her rocker, working at a rag rug.* Lomy, *in a pink house dress, is putting the finishing touches on the "DOOR-MATS" sign.*

Marthy (*Pausing, her needle in air*).—Hain't you most nigh done, Lomy?

Lomy.—Purty nigh. (*Cocking her head, and standing back to admire the work.*) You ought to make up a lot of mats. Miz Fletcher said she'd take some more when she comes back next spring with her man a-fishin.

Marthy.—I'm goin to.

Lomy (*Making careful strokes here and there*).—Hope she brings a box of old clothes, like she promised. (*Steps back again and studies the sign.*)

Marthy.—It'd help a heap.

Lomy (*Stepping nearer the table, and using her brush carefully*).—Wish she'd fetch some bright yaller calico dresses to tear up.

Marthy.—I'm glad you're takin notice of rugs. Mebbe you'll try your hand, at odd spells, when you git tired of practicin music.

Lomy.—I calc'late to, come winter.

Marthy.—I bet you make some purty ones.

Lomy (*Laying down the brush, and standing off to admire the beauty of her work*).—Thar now! Hit's plumb done.

Marthy (*Turning in her chair to look*).—Hain't it grand?

Lomy.—Must I go and nail it up for you on the front of the house?

Marthy.—Land, no! You'd smash all your fingers and bend all the nails and waste 'em. You'd better git yourself washed off all over, and git spruced up for the barbycue. I never kept Andy waitin a second in my life.

Lomy.—Andy can nail it up for you, if he gits here afore I'm ready. (*Turns toward the dining room door.*)

Marthy.—Andy done his share when he made the sign, and you done your'n when you painted it. I'll hang it up myself.

Blowsy (*Appearing at the outside door, as* Lomy *passes into the dining room, on her way to her room, removes his hat, starts in, steps back to give a big squirt of tobacco juice, then enters unceremoniously, quite after the fashion of the privileged boarder—which he* *is. His suspenders are flapping loose at the back.*) Dang my scratchy hide, but it's hot! (*Draws the splint bottomed chair to the center of the room, drops his quid of tobacco into his hand and tosses it out the door. Sits astride the chair.*)

Marthy.—Must be, if it stopped you from pitchin horseshoes this early in the day. (*Having given him a friendly glance, returns to her work.*)

Blowsy (*Reminded by her remark of his mission*).—'Twan't the heat busted up the game. (*Removing the suspenders, holds them out to her.*) Look at them galluses! (*Unable to reach her extended hand with the suspenders, rises and journeys the two steps to her side.*) One buttonhole busted an hour ago; but me and Jed was a-winnin, and I just played on. Then to'ther busted, and I had to go to the rear for repairs.

Marthy (*Accepting the suspenders, breaks off a length of black thread and begins the task*).—This is some bust, Captain Blowsy!

Blowsy (*Resuming his chair*).—Do your dingdest on 'em, Marthy. My reppitation as a horse-shoe pitcher hangs on the strinth of my galluses. (*Folding his arms on the chair back.*) Hain't you kind o' late, gittin ready for Andy?

Marthy.—I hain't a-goin to the barbycue. I told Andy I couldn't spare the time.

Blowsy.—In my day and time, when a promised husband asked a gal to go to a barbycue, she didn't say whuther she could spare the time—she jist *spore* the time, and went.

Marthy.—Captain Blowsy! How long did you board in this house?

Blowsy (*Rubbing the back of his head, with tousling effect to his hair*).—Well, ever sence my Tirzy died, twenty-nine year ago next fifth o' *Febuary*. And that was afore you was born, my gal. The gover'mint settled a pension on this busted hip that I carried from the battle of Apple Ridge, and your Ma and Pa tuk me to board. Yes, sir-ee! And I've been in this house longer'n you, and—

Marthy.—And the miller's been here longer'n you. Ask him how many times he ever come from grindin flour at the mill and found a cold snack on that table yander. How many times have you ever sot down to a cold snack in this house?

Blowsy.—Nary a time, Marthy. You've biled the coffee and baked the shortnin bread as faithful as a soldier on Sherman's March to the Sea. And thar hain't been a Sunday in these ten year sence your Ma died that Andy Potter ain't sot hisself at that table yander and gorged his belly on pie and sich, the likes of which his Ma is too triflin to make for 'im.

Marthy.—She ain't very stout.

Blowsy.—The pies Andy's et in this house! Five hundred and twenty Sundays, not countin leap years! And you're still bakin pies for Andy!

Marthy.—I calc'late to bake a thousand more, God sparin my life—and Andy's appetite for pie.

Blowsy.—When you goin to larn Lomy to bake pies?

Marthy.—Seems easier to bake 'em myself. She's allus so busy.

Blowsy.—At what?

Marthy.—Oh, I reckon—

Blowsy.—Better larn 'er what you know in the kitchen, whar larnin's cheap. Spites me how you trot 'er off every Monday to take a music lesson that you've got to wash and scrub and cook to git money to pay for.

Marthy.—I make some money on my door-mats, too. See that nice sign Andy made for me to hang on the front of the house and git people to stop in and buy some rugs?

Blowsy.—Andy's better a-hewed you a cradle out'n a hick'ry tree, and put rockers on the bottom of it.

Marthy.—For goodness' sake! We ain't even married yit!

Blowsy.—You'd better be. Hit makes my blood bile to see you work your fingers off to pay for that piany for Lomy to bang on.

Marthy.—Hit's worth all my work jist to hear Lomy play. I can shet my eyes and believe that Sister Mary, up yander, is hearin it, and lookin down on me and smilin at me, for she knows I've done my best by her pore little baby. (*Wiping her eyes on her apron.*) And Ma and Pa up thar, too, they know I've kept my word to 'em.

Blowsy.—Kept it too danged well for your own good, Marthy.

Marthy.—I hain't done too much for Lomy. I'm all she's got. (*Brightening*) Lomy's gittin to play the piany that nice, Andy says he could set all night and watch her play "Granger's Grand March."

Blowsy.—And while he's a-settin, 'stid of you a-shettin your eyes and visionin your Ma in heaven, I'd advise you to open 'em and see how Andy's in heaven, jist a-watchin Lomy play—like she was a slice of honey in the comb, and he could eat her at a gulp.

Marthy.—Why, Captain Blowsy!

Blowsy.—You're plumb blind whar Lomy's concarned.

Marthy.—What's eatin on you? You hain't never talked like this afore.

Blowsy.—Jist a misery, gripin my vitals, to see how you lay on the floor for Lomy to walk on. And you can't see how's she's walkin off with your man.

Marthy.—I put Andy up to take her to the big meetin, and sich, so she'd not git a chance to think about Bilge Brown.

Blowsy.—You ought to a-tuk Bilge yourself, ten years ago. His pap's got a farm for every child under his roof.

Marthy.—Well, what's a farm, if you have to marry a Brown? Them was Pap's very words when he told me I couldn't keep company with Bilge.

Blowsy.—Bilge is a fine feller.

Marthy.—But his old grandmother was nothin but a thief, Pap said.

Blowsy.—Her folks allus tuk back whatever she was kotched a-sneakin out'n a store.

Marthy.—Yes, old Link Brown had so much money they jist called it by a big name, and let—

Blowsy.—Klappin maniac's the word.

Marthy.—Well, she was a thief, anyhow; and I know Pap'd ruther see Lomy dead than—

Blowsy.—Marryin a Brown'd be a nuff sight better'n marryin a drummer, like her Ma done, and him a-desertin her, and her draggin herself back home here to git 'er baby for you to slave your daylights out on.

Marthy.—I know Pap wouldn't want her to go with Bilge, for he wouldn't let me go with 'im. And I don't mind what I done for Lomy.

Blowsy.—That's the trouble. You sot 'er above yourself, and you sot 'er above Andy, the devotedest lover ever stepped over a gal's thrashold. But you can't expect Andy to stay devoted forever. Whar a man pays 'is court, he wants to be the main cheese. And Lomy's the *whole* cheese, in this house.

Marthy.—I promised Ma and Pa I'd—

Blowsy.—And you promised Andy. You said you'd marry him. But you put 'im off for Lomy.

Marthy.—Hit's Andy's doin's as much as mine. Andy's got to live with his Ma and run the farm. But I can't take Lomy thar. His Ma won't have a piany in her house. Says it ain't Scripture. She's allus been agin Lomy.

Blowsy.—I reckon it hurts her feelin's to see how you treat Andy.

Marthy.—I treat Andy all right.

Blowsy.—Why don't you marry 'im, stid of stickin to this ramshackle house cookin for boarders to buy Lomy a piany on the stallin plan?

Marthy.—Lomy needs a piany while her fingers is young an' nimble.

Blowsy.—A man likes 'is wife young an' nimble, too.

Marthy.—Me and Andy ain't giddy. I ain't no fly up the creek.

Blowsy.—No. You're jist a snail, all bunged up with rheumatiz. That's what you air. (*Defiantly.*) Whar's Lomy, now?

Marthy.—Gittin ready to go to the barbycue.

Blowsy.—I lowed so. Who with?

Marthy.—Andy.

Blowsy.—I lowed so. He's been larnin 'er to shoot at a targit. Has he larnt you yit?

Marthy.—I don't take to sich things quick like Lomy does.

Blowsy.—Has he tried to larn you?

Marthy.—What if he ain't?

Blowsy.—He jist ain't. That's all. I was jist a-noticin it to you.

Marthy.—You don't have to notice things about Andy to me. That's why I picked him to spend my days with. He's that stiddy, I don't even dream about 'ims, nights! Sometimes I dream my bread won't raise, or a cake fell jist as I tuk it out'n the oven. But I never have no nightmares about Andy. He's that good I jist love 'im better every day!

Blowsy.—That ain't no sign that Andy's a-lovin you with increasin devotion. A man's love feeds on livin with his woman. Hit's time you married Andy or give 'im the mitten.

Marthy.—I can't take Lomy thar, and I can't leave her behind.

Blowsy.—Let Bilge Brown make up to 'er.

Marthy.—Marry a Brown, and raise up a passel o' thieves? Pap'd raise up in his grave!

Blowsy.—I hain't excited about Lomy a raisin a litter of thieves nor any other brand of younguns, onless you was handy by to suckle 'em on a bottle and wash their didies. I hain't a-frettin about the thievin blood in the Brown veins. The spondulix is what makes the mare trot fast. Bilge could hire a gal to fry his bacon and wait on Lomy, and give you a rest.

Marthy.—You can't set thar and run Lomy down.

Blowsy.—I hain't a-runnin Lomy down. I'm jist tryin to git you to marry Andy afore you git wore to a frazzle o' rags. Now when I popped the question to my Tirzy, I asked her *would* she, not *when* would she, and she said she would, right off the bat. Her Pap said, "Hell, no!" Her Ma said, "Wait till you git seven quilts pieced." So we jist compromised and run off and got married. But the young fellers don't seem to have no git up and git to em, these days. Now if Andy—

Marthy.—Andy's a good worker.

Blowsy.—In the cornfield! Huh! If he had the guts of a gnat he'd bring you to a show-down. (*Goes over and stands patting her on the shoulder.*) Why, Marthy, gal, can't you trust me for advice? Me and your Pap fit clean through the war side by side, in the Fifth Missouri Calvary together. You know I'm your friend, don't you?

Marthy.—Yes, Captain Blowsy. But you recollect Ma's dyin words.

Blowsy.—Lomy could be tuk care of somehow. 'Twouldn't hurt Lizy Potter to hear some piany twiddlin. The Lord won't hold it agin 'er if she ain't the one makin the racket. I'd ruther see that piany smashed to a million splinters than to see you and Andy busted up.

Marthy.—Me and Andy ain't the bustin kind.

Blowsy.—Shucks! Look at that sign! I'd like to take an ax to it, and stick up a board with one word on it—"Married." Now let's jist quit this argufyin, Marthy; and you tell Andy you're ready to jump the broom-stick.

Marthy.—I aim to git married, some time—as soon as I can.

Blowsy.—Well, the time to jump the broom-stick is when thar's a broom-stick to jump. I think you ought to jist make up your mind and git married, and be done with it.

Marthy.—Well, mebbe that's I ought to do.

Blowsy.—This is regular marryin weather, Marthy. Shiver my splinters if it ain't. (*Pats her on the shoulder.*) Now you git all spruced up afore Andy comes, and tell him you're ready and a-rarin to git married.

Marthy (*Looking up eagerly*).—Do you think I ought?

Blowsy.—Hit's the oughtest thing on earth. Thar's nothin like settin the day for a thing to happen.

Marthy.—I guess you're right. Won't Andy be tickled?

Blowsy.—You bet! I'm all jumped up over it myself. Make it a promise you'll set the day.

Marthy.—All right. I'll promise you to tell Andy when he comes; and me and him can set the day.

Blowsy.—I'll hold you to that, Missy. (LOMY *in her pink kimona comes and stands in the door.*)

Marthy.—All right, Captain. I'll keep my word.

Blowsy (*Seeing* LOMY, *shuffles away from* MARTHY'S *chair and begins adjusting his suspenders, which he has hastily grabbed from the chest where* MARTHY *has placed them*).—Well, Lomy. You look like a barbycue.

Lomy.—How did you know I was goin? (*Pulls her kimona together.*)

Blowsy.—I jist prognosticated.

Marthy (*Tidying her work on the chest*).—My, my! The taters ain't peeled, and I bet the fire is smooth out!

Blowsy.—Feels kind o' frosty in here. (LOMY *turns her back on him.*)

Marthy (*Bustling over to put some kindling into the stove*).—I aimed to cook a squash today, but it's so late, I guess I'll jist cook some taters and make some slaw.

Lomy.—That'll be a-plenty for Saturday.

Marthy (*Lighting the fire with a match from the safe on the wall*).—Hit'll have to do. Hit's plumb late.

Lomy.—'Twon't hurt 'em to wait a minute if you ain't ready on the dot.

Marthy.—Well, I hate to be slow.

Lomy (*Holding out a pink silk stocking, which she had hoped to hide till* BLOWSY *had gone*).—And I hate to wear a ragged stockin. Look at this, Marthy—Here's a hole in my best stockin.

Marthy.—I guess I can mend it.

Lomy.—Have you got any pink silk thread?

Marthy (*Forgetting her boarders in her eagerness to serve* LOMY, *comes over and takes the stocking*).—I reckon so. Give it to me. (LOMY *goes to the cupboard, where she finds the cookie jar, from which she takes six, and munches them during the ensuing conversation.* MARTHY, *finding the right spool of thread—in the basket on the chests—itsin her rocker and works happily.*) I can fix it in a jiffy.

Lomy.—That thread looks all right. (*Draws near and watches* MARTHY.)

Marthy.—Yes, hit's jist a match for it.

Blowsy.—Now, Marthy, remember your promise.

Marthy (*Rocking enthusiastically*).—Oh, I will, Captain! I will.

Blowsy (*Having satisfied himself of the security of his suspenders, dons his hat and moves toward the outside door; pauses to take out his plug of tobacco*).—Now you're shoutin. That's the way to talk. (*Takes a quid of tobacco and restores the plug to his pocket.*)

Marthy.—Yes, it is, Captain. Hit's all right. (BLOWSY *goes out.*)

Lomy (*Sitting in the chair which* BLOWSY *has left*).—What'd he have his galluses off in here for?

Marthy.—Busted 'em, pitchin horseshoes. I mended 'em for 'im.

Lomy.—The hog! Gittin his work off'n you for nothin!

Marthy.—He's been awful good to us!

Lomy.—What'd he make you promise?

Marthy (*With secret happiness*).—Oh, nothin. (*Drops her hands in her lap and sighs blissfully.*)

Lomy.—Tell me. He knows I'd be agin it.

Marthy.—'Twan't about you.

Lomy.—I could tell by his looks he felt guilty towards me.

Marthy.—I don't think he looked any different. (*Resumes the mending.*)

Lomy.—What's he wantin off o' you?

Marthy.—Nothin, for hisself, Lomy. Hit's somethin for me.

Lomy.—Why, you got a new taffety silk dress! Whatever else on earth is he naggin you to buy?

Marthy.—Hit's nothin to buy. Here's your stockin. (*Rising, offers it to* LOMY.)

Lomy.—Then it *has* got somethin to do with me. I knowed it all the time.

Marthy.—You knowed wrong, Lomy. Here's your stockin.

Lomy (*Taking the stocking*).—Tell, Marthy. What is it?

Marthy (*Turning to the stove*).—Hit ain't got nothin to do with you.

Lomy (*Running to Marthy*).—Tell me, Marthy—please!

Marthy.—I'll tell you before long.

Lomy.—Hit's some scheme in the back of his head that you don't see through.

Marthy.—Oh, yes, I see it all right.

Lomy (*Turning away*).—I don't keer. I got somethin in the back o' my head, too.

Marthy (*Seizing* LOMY'S *hand*).—Lomy! You ain't been sneakin out with Bilge Brown?

Lomy.—Wouldn't pick 'im out'n a *mud* puddle.

Marthy.—You got to promise me you won't look at 'im.

Lomy.—Hain't thunk of 'im for a month o' Sundays.

Marthy.—And don't you git to thinkin of 'im, either.

Lomy.—I can promise I wont, honest. Cross my heart an hope to die and be cut up in bits no bigger'n a chigger.

Marthy.—All right, Lomy. I knowed you'd remember how Pap felt about the Brown family.

Lomy (*Impulsively putting her arms around* MARTHY'S *neck*).—Dear old Marthy! (*Kisses her on the cheek, then turns abruptly and starts toward the dining room door, leaving Marthy touched, yet puzzled by the unusual show of emotion. Pausing at the door she speaks sweetly, almost tearfully.*) Thank you, darling aunt, for mendin my stockin, and for all you've done for me. (*Runs out.*)

Marthy (*Mystified and deeply moved by* LOMY'S *unexpected show of gratitude looks toward the door through which she has gone*).—Dear little gal! (*Puts the splint bottomed chair in its place by the table, and, lightly humming a tune, takes the paring-knife from the table drawer, gets the dishpan, fills it with potatoes, pours on some water, and dropping into the chair, begins to peel potatoes—while the tune turns into the song:*)

"Count your blessings; name them one by one;
Count your blessings; see what God hath done.
Count your blessings; name them one by one;
Count your many blessings; see what God hath done."

(*During the singing,* ANDY *appears in the door-way, and* MARTHY, *sensing his presence, looks up—to meet his wondering stare. Hastily placing the potatoes on the table, she runs to him, draws him into the kitchen, and closes the door.*) Andy! Got somethin to tell you!

Andy (*In his Sunday suit of tan serge, with a blue tie, maintains his usual stolidity long enough to deposit his Sunday hat of white straw on the vegetable bench*).—Have you?

Marthy (*Surprised at his surprise*).—Oh, yes, Andy!

Andy.—Well, that's—nice, Marthy. (*Not only wondering about her unwonted enthusiasm, but a trifle nervous.*) That's nice.

Marthy.—Let's not waste a minute.

Andy (*Stiffening*).—A what?

Marthy.—Let's not waste any time.

Andy.—What's that?

Marthy.—Ourself, Andy. (*Drawing close to him.*) We got to hurry. Lomy'll be here in a minute.

Andy (*Alarmed*).—What's that?

Marthy.—Lom'll be ready to go to the barbycue.

Andy (*With a sigh of relief*).—Oh, yes—I know.

Marthy.—Hit's mighty good of you to take 'er—and keep 'er from runnin around.

Andy.—Why, er—er—

Marthy.—Hain't you bustin to know what I got to tell you?

Andy (*With nervous volubility*).—Shore, Marthy. I allus—like to talk to you. You're the sensiblest gal I ever seen.

Marthy.—Aw, Andy, now! But we allus understood each other so good, ain't we?

Andy.—Why, yes, Marthy.

Marthy.—I allus knowed, no difference how hard a time I had all week, you'd come a-Sunday mornin and stay till after supper.

Andy.—Yes, Marthy. I've et many a good meals of vittles in this house.

Marthy.—But you won't eat any more, Andy.

Andy.—You ain't sick, or nothin, air you, Marthy?

Marthy (*Laughing gaily—to his consternation*).—For land sake!

Andy.—I'm glad you're feelin good, Marthy.

Marthy.—Goodness me! You're plumb blind!

Andy.—I didn't come to pick a quarrel with you, or nothin, Marthy.

Marthy.—Of course not! You come to take Lomy to the barbycue. And I'm—

Andy.—Well, no, Marthy. I can't take Lomy to the barbycue. That's what I come to say. You see, Ma's ailin—

Marthy (*Putting her arms around his unwilling neck*).—Oh, Andy!

Andy (*Very uncomfortable*).—That's nobody thar to cook.

Marthy (*Releasing him*).—I'll git my things and go right along with you. (*Moves away a few steps then turns back and *looks at him shyly.*) That's the good thing I've got to tell you. I'm going to marry you, and not keep you waitin no longer. (*Generously attributing his silence to joy, she rattles on.*) Captain Blowsy's jist been tellin me what a fool I've been to keep you waitin.

Andy.—What's it his business?

Marthy.—Why, why, he's our best friend!

Andy.—I reckon he is. But he's better keep his mouth shet.

Marthy.—You've said to me a thousand times, 'twarn't right to keep holdin you off year after year.

Andy.—I reckon you done for the best, Marthy.

Marthy.—Oh, Andy! You're the best man in the world!

Andy.—Don't talk that way, Marthy.

Marthy.—You used to like to hear me talk that way.

Andy.—I know it.

Marthy.—Oh, Andy! What's the matter?

Andy.—Nothin, Marthy.

Marthy.—What have I done, Andy?

Andy.—Nothin. (*Bracing up, looks at her grimly.*) Hit's what you ain't done, Marthy.

Marthy.—What ain't I done?

Andy.—You ain't married me, Marthy.

Marthy.—I've been true to you, Andy.

Andy.—But you wouldn't marry me. Hit's marryin that gives point to love, Marthy.

Marthy.—I'm goin to marry you now, Andy. (*Puts an excited hand on his arm.*) I ain't even goin to set a snack for the boarders. I'm goin with you right now, Andy, and take care of your Ma.

Andy.—You needn't mind, Marthy.

Marthy.—Oh, Andy, don't you like me? (*Silence.*) You been tellin me lies?

Andy.—Never told you no lie yit, Marthy.

Marthy.—You said you liked me, and wanted to marry me.

Andy.—I did, when I said it. I hain't said it sence I didn't.

Marthy.—Sence you didn't—didn't like me?

Andy (*His eyes on the floor, nods*).—Uh, huh.

Marthy.—When was it you started hatin me?

Andy.—I don't hate you. Jist got out o' the way o' lovin you, I guess.

Marthy.—Got out o' the way! When was that? I never noticed no change in you.

Andy.—I didn't neither. I swear I didn't, Marthy. I never noticed when I started not to lovin you, tell one day—as sudden as lightnin—I knowed I was lovin Lomy.

Marthy.—Lomy! Why, she's like my baby! I looked on you as a sort of father to her.

Andy.—I don't feel like a father to Lomy. I feel like her husband.

Marthy.—Andrew Potter!

Andy.—It was you sot me to goin with her.

Marthy.—To keep her from goin with Bilge Brown.

Andy.—I kept her from 'im, didn't I?

Marthy.—When did this begin?

Andy.—Fust time I tuk 'er in my buggy by myself.

Marthy.—Andy Potter! And comin here for Sunday dinner stiddy as a clock.

Andy.—Yes, I know, Marthy. But when I drove off down the road that fust time with Lomy, I reckon I felt like a father, all right. But she snuggled up to me in the buggy, like I guess she larnt to snuggle up to Bilge, when she snuk out and buggy-rided with 'im, and, well, I didn't feel like a father to 'er no more. Lomy's alive; and she made me feel alive, too.

Marthy.—And her nothin but a child! (*Droops into the rocking chair.*)

Andy.—She's got the ways of a woman, Marthy.

Marthy.—I'd never a-thunk it of you, Andy!

Andy.—I aimed to be true to you, Marthy. Never said a word of what was passin through me; and I made up my mind not to go ridin with Lomy no more. But you asked me to take 'er to the reunion at Springton—and what could I do? You said you couldn't go, on account o' rugs and things.

Marthy.—Tryin to make money to pay stallins on Lomy's piany.

Andy.—Yes, you was all for Lomy. You give up everything for Lomy.

Marthy (*Rising suddenly, runs and puts her arms about his neck*).—I can't give you up for Lomy.

Andy (*Disengaging her arms*).—You've already give me up.

Marthy (*Sinking into the chair*).—Oh, Andy! How could you treat me this way?

Andy.—I didn't aim to treat you bad, Marthy. But me and Lomy—well, we got married last Sattidy, at the Court House.

Marthy.—Married?

Andy.—I didn't aim to tell you for a spell. Calc'lated not to take Lomy home till Ma got reconciled. But I reckon I'd better take 'er along, and git it over with.

Marthy.—All over with!

Andy.—You hain't mad at me, air you, Marthy?

Marthy.—I don't know how I feel. (*Rushing to him, puts a hand on his arm.*) Kiss me, Andy!

Andy.—Why, Marthy! You never 'peared to set no store by spoonin. And now, when it's no fitten time for it, you up and wants to kiss me! (*Her head droops to his shoulder.*) I don't understand you.

Marthy (*Suddenly lifting her eyes to his*).—Good-bye, Andy.

Andy (*Unable to resist her mood, kisses her*).—Good-bye.

Marthy (*Turning away in despair*).—Oh, good-bye! Good-bye! Andy.

Andy.—Don't say nothin to Lomy about this. I'll not tell her we can't go to the barbycue till we've got started.

Lomy (*Entering from the dining room, in a summery dress, with pretty hat, and much powder on her nose*).—What's that you ain't a-goin to tell me?

Andy.—Ma's sick.

Lomy.—Can't we go to the barbycue?

Marthy.—His Ma's sick, Lomy, and he needs his wife.

Lomy.—You told her we got married?

Andy.—I've come to take you home with me.

Lomy.—Not now. My things ain't ready.

Andy.—We got to go, anyhow. We can come back this evenin and git your things. (*With his hand on her arm, draws her toward the outside door.*)

Lomy (*Leaving him to go to* MARTHY).—Good-bye, Marthy.

Marthy (*Taking* LOMY'S *hand and shaking it stiffly*).—Wish you much joy, Miz Potter.

Lomy.—Wish you'd say somethin cross to me. You've been so good to me, Marthy. Say somethin.

Marthy.—What can I say? I've give you my life, and you've tuk my Andy away from me.

Lomy.—I didn't aim to do nothin bad.

Marthy.—What makes you stand thar? Does it give you satisfaction to see me feelin bad?

Andy (*Coming toward the girls*).—Let me explain, Marthy.

Marthy.—I've had enough explainin. I hate the sight of both of you.

Lomy.—No use gittin sore.

Marthy.—I hate myself worse. Soft enough to have feelins, and fool enough to show it!

Lomy.—Well, if you'd a-had a speck o' pep, Andy'd a-got so worked up over you he'd a-picked you up and run off with you years ago.

Marthy.—Sneaks! Both of you!

Lomy.—Jealous—that's what you air. You think you been puttin Andy off all this time. 'Twan't you. 'Twas *him* that dilly-dallied, if you only knowed it.

Andy.—I reckon she's right, Marthy. I guess our courtship jist smoldered along, 'cause thar warn't enough fire to bust out in a blaze.

Lomy.—And if it was wrong for me to cut you out, you're to blame. You brung me up.

Marthy.—You impudence!

Lomy (*Running to Marthy*).—I'm sorry I said that, Marthy. (*Putting her arms about her, kisses her.*) Won't you forgive me, Marthy?

Andy (*Nervously*).—I've got to go. (*Receives no response, and goes over and takes* LOMY *by the arm.*) Come on, Lomy.

Lomy.—I feel so bad. (*Shame-faced, but not tearful.*)

Marthy (*Kissing her, turns her toward* ANDY).—Hit's all right, honey.

Lomy.—Makes me want to cry.

Marthy.—Run along with your husband, Lomy.

Andy.—Come on, honey.

Lomy (*Going with him*).—I'm comin back every day.

Andy.—Come on. (*Opens the door.*)

Lomy (*Pausing at the door, and looking down the street*).—Marthy—(*Turning back to* MARTHY.) Brace up, Mart. Here comes Captain Blowsy hobblin up the road. I reckon he'll be glad you got me off'n your hands. (*To* ANDY.) Let's slip out through the front door. (*They hurry out through the dining room.*)

Marthy (*Dropping into the rocking chair, sits staring at her hands*).—Off'n my hands! (BLOWSY'S *step is heard on the porch. She lifts her head, goes quickly to the table and begins paring potatoes.*)

Blowsy (*Entering puffily, with a newspaper in his hand*).—Look at this, Marthy. (*Tapping the paper.*) Their license is in the Springton Weeky News! Jed jist got it in the mail-box!

(*Exhausted, he sinks into the rocking chair, and flops his hat on the floor.*)

Marthy (*Quietly*).—They got married, Sattiday.

Blowsy.—I vum!

Marthy.—You're a week behind with your news.

Blowsy.—I'll be danged!

Marthy.—Hit's a good match.

Blowsy.—Here I was, bustin myself to git you braced up to Marry Andy! 'S what I git for meddlin with Cupid!

Marthy.—You wasn't meddlin. I jist—

Blowsy.—Naggin Cupid—that's what I was doin!

Marthy.—You wasn't naggin . . . I jist . . . (*Dropping the paring knife, lays her head on the table and sobs.*)

Blowsy (*Toddling over to pat her on the shoulder*).—Thar, thar, honey!

Marthy.—I didn't know a body could be so killed and go on gittin their breath.

Blowsy.—Tut, tut! The sun won't stand still—

Marthy.—I'd got so used to Andy!

Blowsy.—Shucks, Marthy! You can git used to anything, if you set your mind to it. Now Lomy may even git used to Lizy Potter for a mother-in-law!

Marthy.—Oh, Andy! I didn't think he'd do me this way!

Blowsy.—Aw, Andy don't bear you no spite! Look at the nice sign he made you.

Marthy (*Lifting her head to gaze at the sign*).—Lomy painted it for me.

Blowsy (*With sarcasm*).—Good team, they are. They're tryin to make it easy for you to pay the stallin man on Lomy's piany.

Marthy (*Stung to sudden indignation*).—They wuz, wuz they?

Blowsy.—Shore! That's the easiest way Lomy has of gittin a piany, for Andy's Ma won't let him pay for it.

Marthy.—I'll show 'em. I'll keep the piany and take lessons myself!

Blowsy.—By gash, Marthy! You've got a speck of spunk, at last. That's the way to talk. No use makin door mats, and being a door mat yourself.

Marthy.—You allus was so sensible.

Blowsy.—Now let me tell you the sensiblest thing I know—Thar's jist as good fish in the sea, for them as ain't too stubborn to cast a hook.

Marthy.—But Pap picked Andy for me.

Blowsy.—Well, if you'd a-been left to your own devices, you'd a-tuk Bilge.

Marthy.—Do you reckon I would?

Blowsy.—Shore! I hain't forgot the shine in your eyes the time Bilge brung you home from church.

Marthy.—But Pap said . . .

Blowsy.—Yes, what did your Pap do? He chased Bilge off, because he didn't like the shape of his grandmother's fingers. And he picked Andy for you. But . . .

Marthy.—Ma liked Andy, too.

Blowsy.—But it wasn't your Ma and your Pa that was gittin married. Hit was you. And their pickin hain't done no good. You never got keen enough about Andy to marry 'im; and Bilge has been like a fish out o' water. He's cast eyes at every gal in the community . . . but never looked at none of 'em the third time. That's what your Pap done, tryin juggle love affairs. But it ain't too late to repair the damage. Bilge is gittin better lookin every day.

Marthy.—He allus did have sich a nice complexion.

Blowsy.—Dang my scratchy hide, Marthy! Now you've got Andy off'n your hands, you can heist your chin and start out new.

Marthy.—Why Captain Blowsy! What do you mean?

Blowsy.—I don't mean nothin. I never meddle with love affairs. You can use your own head, Marthy. That's what it's for. Use it.

Marthy.—I jist believe I will!

Blowsy.—If Lomy can put up with Lizy Potter and her rheumatiz for a mother-in-law, I reckon you could worry along with Bilge's grandmother—and her dead and in her grave afore you was born.

Marthy.—Bilge allus was good company.

Blowsy.—Bilge'll give you something to dream about, nights. (*The slow curtain falls upon* MARTHY *looking ecstatically into space, and* BLOWSY *slyly grinning toward her.*)

CURTAIN

GLOSSARY FOR DOOR MATS

For is pronounced—fur.

Was—wuz.

Can't, with a as in ain't.

Your—yer.

Care—keer.

Share, chair, etc. with a changed e as in met.

Here, year, fear, dear, etc. with sound of y before the vowel, which is always sounded like e in met.

Poor—pore.

Ma and Pa, with broad a as in law.

The r is never omitted or slurred. It is almost a burr on the Ozark tongue.

THE GIFT

By Silne Kayrd

I shield this quivering, burning pain,
As men keep candles from the rain,
And on my woe I heap a mound,
As men hide treasure underground.
For pain will light my narrow path,
And woe gain all that living hath.
Keen anguish was the modest fee,
For which life planted sight in me.
Sow bitterness but never reap,
For peace with harvest comes,—and sleep.

THE CROWNED POETESS OF BRAZIL

A Study of Rosalina Coelho Lisboa, in the Loveliest City of the World.

BY IGNATIUS PHAYRE

Author of "America's Day," etc.

This beautiful girl is the very embodiment of Romance. She comes of one of the noblest families in Old Portugal. She dwells with her mother and brothers and her exquisite little daughter, Raulyta, in a fairy avenue of royal palms by the most wondrous sea-lagoon in all this lovely earth, which is to say, the Bay of Rio, into which lavish nature has crammed all the marvels of the French and Italian Rivieras, together with the soft charms of the Lagos di Como, Maggiore and Lugano.

Eternal summer surrounds this gifted poetess. The trees that figure in her powerful lyrics never lose their leaves. Brazil is a true lotus-land, where tiny jewelled birds hover and thrill above "bugle-blooms divine", beyond the luscious imagining of a Shelley or a Keats.

At once simple and complex of soul, Rosalina Lisboa has the soul-strength of a man, with all the luring grace of a rapt Murillo-Madonna. Left a widow at eighteen, with father and fortune likewise swept away, this lovely Brazilian girl now supports herself by her curiously austere Art.

And at twenty-two she was crowned as Laureate by the Brazilian Academy of Letters, whose Jury of "Immortals," with the works of sixty-three brilliant candidates before them, unanimously awarded their unique distinction to the volume of verse called "*Rito Pagao*" ("Pagan Rites") which Rosalina Lisboa had sent in . . . under the assumed name of a man!

And, indeed, her poems are not "womanish" in any sentimental way, nor are they at all concerned (strange to say) with the merely carnal Love which has absorbed the genius of poetesses, from Lesbian Sappho to the passionate singer of "Sonnets from the Portuguese."

A Dante note of sorrow and sympathy pervades "*Rito Pagao*," like the heavy scent of Brazilian night-flowers. It is a Dante passage that appears on the fly-leaf of the book, to strike the note of it.

Before singing of heroes, Rosalina exalts the obscure and the glorious Failures who fall short of their own epic hopes, and like the fabled airman of old were at last engulfed in the lonely sea of their eager aspirations. Among these is that Knight of Romance, her own father, whose chivalrous passion for lost causes was his political undoing.

The patriot-odes of Senhora Lisboa are tinged with the peculiar *caritas* of gentle pride and strength which is her salient trait. This is well seen in "*Patria Brasileira*" and "*Terra de Santa Cruz*" (the original name of Brazil). And at the election of the "Queen of the Students," the earnest young Laureate recited an eloquent paean to this marvellous land, addressed to the "*Mocidade da minha geracao*" ("The Youth of My own Day").

Here Brazil called aloud to the troubled nations:—"In me your Dreams become Realities"! "To ye in fetters, I am Freedom; to the cohorts of Hatred, I offer sweet bonds of Brotherhood. To the broken in spirit I am the Will to Labour, and the shining stair up to sunny heights"!

"Come, then, to me, for I am All-Understanding! The light of my skies will give new vision to the eyes that fail. Come to me, ye that suffer! My breast shall feed the world, O mourning Races! And mine own people fling out to all, the loving arms of sympathy and aid.

Senhora Lisboa's short stories inevitably contain the moral of martyrdom for the ideal, with tireless quest for Christ-like perfection. Sometimes the strong spirit droops to withdraw from stark reality into the serener citadel of Dreams, and the *maya*-reverie of Buddhist contemplation. Yet these moods are rare.

French critics censure the girl-poet for her impatience with the ugly facts of life. Latin-American opinion declares that the beautiful Rosalina transcends the limitations of sex in her powerful Art, and that one should never allude to her as a *poetisa* (poetess), but always as the *Poet*, with all the virile mastery of music and colour that marked the bards of all nations and all ages.

Into her mystic garden this girl of genius bids all who suffer, that she may impart to them the secret transmutation of Pain into Joy by forgetfulness of self and loving service to others. Her 'Dawns' and 'Nights' are full of soft peace and promise. And in her "*Confiteor*" is implicit the old wisdom of the East.

The Poet's mission is proclaimed: "To reveal true beauty to mankind." So the winds outside her glorious Bay are for Rosalina laden with lovely voices and "perfumes without a name." In "A Scrap of a Letter" occurs the finest description of a tropic landscape which I have ever seen in Portuguese. In "*Meio-Dia*" one feels the fierce heat of noon in perpetual summer under the blaze of the Southern Cross.

In her lonely Tower of Ivory this lovely Brazilian girl follows the fate of Man—"For ever a child, before the shadow and shine of his Illusions".

And in a sonnet of great beauty the quest of Happiness ("*Felicidade*") is solved as a possession of the individual soul, which should never be exposed to external influence . . . "The flower of dreams that blossoms forever in the deep of my heart!"

THE PLACE WE LOVED

By Isla Paschal Richardson

A silver stream, soft shadows, grass.
'Twas Paradise to me,—
For *you* were there . . . But Ah! *Today*
It is Gethsemane!

THE GRAVE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Russell Speirs

Cast of Characters

William MacPhail, *a grave digger*
John MacPherson, *a minister*
David Morrison

Scene: *A graveyard in a country place in Scotland. A bright moonlight night.* William MacPhail *is digging a grave, at either end of which stands a lantern.* John MacPherson *enters the graveyard from the left.*

John.—What's the gude o' they twa lanterns, William, on a bra' nicht like this, wi' the moon full shining and a'?

William.—It's the power o' habit. They're no an actual necessity but they're a kind o' comfort, and there'll be dark places goin' hame through the woods where the moon disna shine.

John.—The power o' habit's a strange power, William, an' some habits are worse nor others to be keepin' intimate wi'. Ay, some o' them are like the grip o' a great hand that willna' let go, and grows stronger and stronger a' the while. If a man would struggle in time, he'd be rid o' the tyranny o' them.

William.—There's nae use o' preachin' at me i' the graveyard. It'll soon be Sunday and I'll be hearin' you i' the kirk. This is no the time o' day for a sermon.

John.—It's no the time o' nicht nor the kind o' nicht to be diggin' a grave, I'm thinkin'.

William.—There's a gey lot o' folk doin' a maire foolish thing i' the noo than diggin' a grave. It's a' very weel to say "Let the deid bury the deid," but it's the livin' has to care for the deid a' the same.

John.—Ay, but it's a lang sight maire important for the livin' to care for the ones that arena' deid yet. There's a gey lot o' folk doin' a maire sensible thing i' the noo than diggin' a grave that might as weel be digged i' the daylight. There's folk oot givin' love to ither folk, and there's folk forgivin' them that has trespassed.

William.—If it's Mary Campbell you're thinkin' o', there's no need to be sayin' a' that. I'm thinkin' o' forgivin' her, but I'm bidin' my time for the doin' o' it.

John.—You've been bidin' your time for a richt lang while, have na you, William?

William.—It's no an easy doin' for a man o' strict morals and respectability to be forgivin' a woman for a sin as bad as Mary Campbell's. And there's no need o' bein' too eager to cancel an evil thing the like o' that. A lang repentance 'll no be doin' her any harm.

John.—A lang delight i' the woman's suffering 'll no be doin' you any gude. I doot that you'll ever be able to forgive her noo. You've an evil pleasure i' the thought o' her livin' alone, away from the place that she once ca'd her home, greetin' her heart oot, like enough, poor lass, wi' the sense o' sin hangin' ower her like a dark cloud. A' the springs o' love are dryin' up inside you, William MacPhail. You've put off forgiveness sae lang that noo it's a habit. You're pilin' up misery in twa places, and the misery in yoursel' is greater nor the misery in her, for there's love and repentance and purity in Mary Campbell's heart, and nae a thing but bitterness in your ane.

William.—There's nae such thing as purity in a woman that's sinned the greatest sin of a'.

John.—Who's to be tellin' which is the greatest sin of a'? A stubborn heid may be a worse thing nor the weakness o' the flesh. We're a' created oot o' passion, but we're no a' born stubborn.

William.—We're a' born sinful, but some of us are strong enough to crush sin oot by livin' gude lives.

John.—You'd no be a gude minister, William. You've too much i' common wi' most o' them. You've too much certainty o' what's gude and what's bad. You've a lot o' hard moral preachments wrapped up in dark packages that are easy enough to pass aboot, but you havna' the saft light o' sympathy and understandin'. You've hard words aboot dinna do this and dinna do that, but you've no saft words of encouragement for onybody that's taken a wrang step.

William.—There's no sinning wi'oot suffering. It's suffering that crushes oot the effects o' sin, and it's sinful for man to stop a punishment ordained by the Almighty himself.

John.—You're blathering, mon. There's no sense in what you've said. It's a doctrine as hard as it is mistaken. Ay, and it's maire sinful to practise it than to do what Mary Campbell did. She was a young lass, William, when that happened, fresh as the morning and innocent as a flower. A wild, shy little thing she was, full o' the same kind o' passion that the years you're making bitter wi' hate are dryin' up in you. She did a wrang thing, perhaps, but she was maire generous and courageous nor you. She gave hersel' to the wrang man, but hoo was she to ken that what was maire than physical in her was only physical in him? And after he'd gone awa' i' fear—though there was naething came o' it— and after the two o' you grew to love ane anither, she told you the hale story that she'd never told anither, and that she had no need o' tellin' you except her honesty. And you, William, gone fair daft ower the lass wi' love, sent her awa' to suffer alone, and willna' get closer to her than a man can get by sendin' cruel, cauld, righteous words aince and a lang while in a letter. You've filled her heid wi' thoughts o' repentance and made her feel a guilt that wasna' natural to her and shouldna' be.

William.—I've been maire kind to her than she'd ha' been treated in older times nor these. Many's the woman has been staned to death for a sin the like o' hers.

John.—Ay, William, before the time o' Jesus. Are your eyes sae darkened by they un-Christian times that ye canna' see the light i' the gospels? Ye canna' ken richtly the story o' the woman taken in adultery. A' they folk were filled wi' the desire to throw stanes at her. But when Jesus foond out the cause o' it a' he lookit at the woman and then lookit doon at the sand and wrote something that wasna' anything at a'. And then he told they folk that the one amang them that was wi'oot sin should cast the first stane. When they'd a' gone awa' wi' their heids hangin' doon, he askit the woman: "Did none o' these condemn ye?" And when she answered, saying "No," Jesus told her: "Neither do I condemn ye." Ay, I've thought often o' what may ha' lain back o' that "Neither do I condemn ye," and I've thought it may ha' been for the same reason that the others didna'. But it's no shaken my faith in Jesus, and it's helpit me to understand the thing that folks ca' sin.

William.—You've never talked like that i' the kirk, John. I'm fearin' you'd no be understood if you did. I've been tryin' to stand up against a' you've said to me the nicht and a' you've said ither nichts. But the truth o' it a' seems to come to me noo like a sudden light i' the dark. I'm thinkin' a such things are foond sudden like. I'm thinkin' that Paul isna the only one that's been on the road to Damascus. But oh, John, I've been stubborn and contrary sae lang noo. I've kept my eyes closed and wouldna' see the light. I'm wonderin' ay, I'm wonderin' if it's ever too late. I'm wonderin' noo if Mary'll understand. I'm beginning' to feel a horror o' mysel', for here I've been, throwin' stanes a' this time, and it's a little wonder if I havna' staned a' the spirit oot o' her at last. Ay, it's me that'll be askin' forgiveness i' the noo. It's me that didna' understand. I've been diggin' at hame i' the garden o' days and diggin' graves for the deid o' nights, and a' this has amounted to is a grave for the love I've been sae lang in fear o'.

John.—You're no sae deep into it, William, that there's no comin' oot. You've the courage noo, for a' the fear's oot o' your heart. Ay, there's a splendid road to travel noo, and I'm thankful for both Mary and yoursel'. I've workit hard on you, William, and I'm glad you've come to your senses at last.

David (*Entering the graveyard from the left*).—Of a' the diggers o' graves, William MacPhail, you're the most insatiable one. And the minister here already. Is it to be a midnight burial party? Who is it, William, that's to find peace in this one?

William.—One o' the Father's children, David, and that's as much as I know this time. The burial's not to be till the morrow, late, so I'll no be diggin' more the nicht. I'll be wi' you as soon as I put the tools i' the shack. Ay, there'll be a funeral the morrow. Somebody'll be goin' to their last rest, and there'll be sorrowin' and greetin'; and mourners wishin' they'd done maire for the deid before the comin' o' death; and folk feelin' guilty for the hardness o' heart they knew too late. Ay, there'll be all o' that; and the greatest sorrow 'll be born o' the memory o' little things, done for the gude o' him or her that's deid, but done wi'oot sympathy or understandin'. There's aye death, and there's aye birth, and in between there's sometimes what we ca' rebirth. But there's marriage bells as well as funeral dirges, and I maunna gae on aboot the deid. Nae, John, I'll be forgettin' the deid and takin' care o' the livin' noo, for I've hid mysel' too lang i' the darkness o' the grave.

(William *goes out, to the right.*)

John.—Hoo did you happen along at this time o' the nicht i' the graveyard, David?

David.—I was wonderin' if William mightna' be here again the nicht. This is the second grave he's been diggin' at since the start o' the week. Ay, folk are dyin' fast this season. I sometimes come ower for a bit o' a gossip wi' William, though he's mostly canny wi' his speech. But what's the do wi' him the nicht, there's sae much wild talk in him? He's been rattlin' it it off like a philosopher. Well, there's a woman from Brechin that's deid, and no doot the grave is for her. She lived here aince, I'm told, and her corpse is comin' back to be buried i' the place. She lived alone in Brechin', a' her folk bein' deid afore her. Some say she died o' a broken heart, and ithers say she died o' grievin' ower a great sin, but there's no one story that's a match for any ither as far as the details o' it are concerned.

John.—A woman from Brechin, David? A woman that lived alone and died o' grievin' ower a great sin?

David.—Ay, that's the story.

John.—It's her grave then, David. It's her grave, and he's been a lang time diggin' it.

David.—Then you've kept him from it wi' a' your visitin' and a' your talk, for by the look o' it, it appears to be only the fair start o' a grave.

John.—Yes, I've kept him from it, at last, wi' a' my talk. But it's too late I was, David, to be of any use. It disna look to your eyes to be a grave full dug, but it's well dug for a' that, and the diggin' o' it has taken a longer time than any but me has the knowledge o'. Ay, there are folk that dig graves, David, that never laid their hands on a pickaxe or a spade. It's only an accident that William dug that kind too.

William (*Returning from the shack*).—We'll keep the lanterns lighted for the dark places i' the wood where the moon disna' shine through.

John.—There's something else I ha' to be tellin' you, William.

William.—Let it wait for the morrow, John. You've told me enough the nicht, and you've given me maire happiness than it's the right for one man to possess. Let it wait till the morning, and let the grave wait. But bring the ither lantern, for the light o' the spirit isna' the kind o' light to lead a man through the dark places i' the wood.

(WILLIAM *goes ahead with his lantern.*)

John.—Is it a coward I am at heart, David, that I havna' the courage to speak i' the face o' a thing like this?

David.—It's daft ye both are, for I havna' understood a word from either of you i' the past five minutes.

(*They follow* WILLIAM *out.*)

CURTAIN

AFTERWARD

BY ISLA PASCHAL RICHARDSON

Today I bought a monument to mark
The place they laid you when they called you dead . . .
"And would you like the rough or polished stone?"
I answered him,—but all the while I saw
The tender, crinkly way your brown eyes smiled—
The little wayward curl across your cheek! . . .
"——will sod the grave." . . . It always startles me—
That word . . . I cannot think of you as—there.
At mention of such things your eyes would hold
A sort of childish horror. But 'tis not
A lonely place, dear heart. A singing bird
Has built her nest within a nearby shrub.
And one lies near you whom we loved . . . And I—
Some day—'tis not a lonely place at all.
You'd love the sunset ling'ring on the hill . . .
"About the lettering—"
But still I saw
That tender little smile about your eyes—
The wayward curl that blew across your cheek!

"A GARDEN IS A LOVESOME THING"

By Ella Kirk Jelliffe

The nostalgia of Eden is upon me. I must go on a garden pilgrimage—a pilgrimage of memory and of vision. In the course of my life I have seen many gardens, but in a casual way, as parts of a travel tour; now I am going to map out a garden itinerary and visit in spirit the gardens I have longed to see and of which I have read.

May I take you with me on this imaginary, and mostly literary, pilgrimage? Which, you will at once perceive, has many advantages over a real journey, in that we shall not be obliged to wait for trains or steamers but may wander at our own will, and in the very best of company—the poets, the essayists, and the story-tellers. Moreover, our course may be historical or geographical or a combination of both routes; we may sail in fancy from Egypt to England, from India to Italy, with no reference to time or tide.

With Bacon, "I do hold it in the Royal Ordering of Gardens, there ought to be Gardens for all the Months in the Year, in which, severally, things of Beauty may be then in Season," and so I would pluck a rose from some Persian Paradeisioi, and the next day perhaps, in some far distant garden by the sea, cull a sprig of rosemary, its azure blue flower meriting its ancient name of sea-spray.

"Who loves a garden still his Eden keeps,
Perennial pleasures plants and wholesome harvests reaps,"

said Bronson Alcott, and I am glad to be accounted among the faithful for it seems to me I have always loved gardens. In my earliest childhood I watched my mother coax luxuriant growth from a little backyard in a great city. I have since learned that "yard" is the earlier form of the word "garden," both springing from the same Anglo-Saxon root "geard" signifying an enclosure.

To this day I can see and smell, in remembrance, the lilacs and syringas that grew against the back fence, and the lilies-of-the-valley that nestled near in shady corners; I catch the sweet breath of the mignonette, heliotrope, and sweet alyssum that grew in the narrow strip of earth along one side of the yard; and of the roses, pansies, and geraniums that flourished on the opposite side. The centre of the yard, I recall, was given up to grass, on which was often spread a dainty handkerchief or bit of lace to draw unto itself the light and grace of the sun, while on lines above was hung, for its weekly refreshing, the household linen.

I look back along the years and see again my mother's loving tendance on her beloved flowers; I watch her patting the earth about them with tender fingers, pulling out the obstrusive weeds, and looking upon her finished work each day with the sense showing plainly in her face, that it was good. She knew, as well as old George Herbert that "a garden must be looked unto and dressed as the body." And always, when the syringas were in bloom, she would bring into the house a spray or two, saying, "This is 'the shepherd's pipe, of the Greeks and it will play to us its sweet tunes to gladden our day."

Years later, in the Adirondack Mountains, a gracious white-haired lady, very like my mother, led me proudly through her garden of old-fashioned flowers, I following ever so carefully lest I step on something precious. Hers was "A Garden wild, but not without a plan." I recall particularly the Foxgloves, the Honeysuckles, the Spiraeas, and the Sweet Briar Roses. There were many, many more kinds of flowers but I cannot remember them all, though I have in my mind's eye the general effect of profusion, of lovely, happy, wholesome growth. Such kinship had this lady gardener with the growing things that she knew all their tricks and their manners, recognized those that would grow together in amicable neighborliness, and provided exclusive quarters for those of more aloof temperaments, for thus fancifully did she disguise her scientific knowledge of soils and of light and shade.

I call to mind also the Botanic Garden of Brooklyn, New York, with its adorable Japanese Garden, and the many happy Spring mornings a dear friend and I spent there, watching the tulips lift their proud heads, and coming suddenly and delightedly upon a hillside of daffodils—a host of them, the dear gregarious things! They brightened the whole day for us and flooded our souls with light.

Then came a trip to Europe, and wherever there was a garden to be seen, thither I found myself wending my way as to a shrine, and there I knelt to touch and smell the sweet growing things.

> "O, the green things growing, the green things growing,
> The faint sweet smell of the green things growing."

My road led to Versailles, "that Tudor garden of unrivalled magnificence," and to many other Miltonic Edens, "woody theatres of stateliest view." In England I walked through castle gardens like that of Warwick, where I loved the trees, those beautiful specimens brought from all over the world. I recall, particularly, one lordly cedar of Lebanon, and it is with reverence that I quote from our dear dead poet,

> "I think that I shall never see
> A poem lovely as a tree.
>
> . . . .
>
> A tree that looks at God all day,
> And lifts her leafy arms to pray."

I stopped to admire the velvet lawns and the ancient trees of Oxford and Cambridge, and I dutifully drove to Hampton Court and duly admired those Tudor Gardens, admired the fecund grape vines and wandered through the maze.

One afternoon, however, I stole off with Barrie and David to make the grand tour of Kensington Gardens, for this I had promised a little child at home that I would do, so that I could tell him whether I had caught a glimpse of Peter Pan, or at least describe to him the Round Pond and "the paths from everywhere that crowd like children to it;" tell him, also, about the Serpentine, that lovely lake, "at the bottom of which is a drowned forest, for if you peer over the edge, you can see the trees all growing upside down." Since the flower gardens with their herbaceous borders are near the Serpentine, you may rest assured I lingered there and lovingly studied what our guide book called "all the best flowers of England."

At Dove Cottage, I picked from Wordsworth's garden a spray of white heather. This auspicious blossom I placed in a little volume of the poet's verse, together with two late daffodils found on Grasmere's shore—treasure troves of the lake region.

At Stratford-on-Avon I pondered upon Ophelia's flowers, and thought what a gracious thing lovers of the poet have done in planting over two hundred of these Shakespeare Borders in various parts of the earth, to gentle it and to keep in living remembrance this prince of poets and of flower lovers.

After much journeying, and seeing many, many gardens, both public and private, in the British Isles, in France and is Germany, I came home, and before settling down to my book-gardens, paid a flying visit to an old, neglected garden surround ing my once dear summer home. As I wandered over its weed-grown paths, a sad and poignant memory swept over me like a sea, and when I espied a few old favorite flowers blooming here and there, I echoed Margaret Deland's thought as she stood in her "Old Garden" and asked,

> "How can they bloom without her tender care?
> Why should they live, when her sweet life is gone?"

MY GARDEN OF LITERATURE

Those Hanging Gardens of Babylon! Long have I thought of them and of their builder, that Nebuchadnezzar of whom the Bible speaks. A mountain garden, a " pensile paradise" of vast extent, built on ascending terraces and supported by arched pillars of great height. Can you not see it in its grandeur and beauty high above the lordly Euphrates, whose waters were piped up to nourish the trees and flowers planted on the top-most terrace?

If gardens, as some writers believe, evoke moods—you remember Andrew Marvell's exclamation, "Fair Quiet have I found thee here?"—then this ancient wonder must surely produce a sort of sorrowful reverie concerning the complexity of man's nature. Here is beauty, symmetry, art; and the founder thereof had it constructed to please his Median queen who pined for her native mountains—surely a kind and tender thought! Yet this same Nebuchadnezzar was also a tyrant, a cruel warrior, who, after destroying their treasured temple, brought the Jews captive to his capital and set them to work on this very thing of beauty. "Here by the rivers of Babylon, they sat down and wept;" here "they hanged their harps upon the Willow trees"and refused to sing for their captors "for they remembered Zion" and their hearts were heavy with homesickness and sore with the misery of exile. Surely good and evil are terribly intertwined in the human heart. Would that the beauty of his Hanging Gardens had softened the king's heart before his dire punishment fell upon him. It pleases us to know that some fifty years later, the Persian Cyrus, also a lover and a maker of gardens, restored the Jews to their kingdom.

And this brings me to the Persian Gardens. Here I spread my rug and sit down to pray, for one does not walk in a Persian garden, one sits and meditates and inhales the perfumes of the flowers scattered in natural profusion. There are no labyrinths, parterres, terraces, or statues, but simple vistas formed by straight avenues of fruit and forest trees; there is nothing to distract the mind from nature, its life and growth and beauty.

Emulating the Persians of old, therefore, I choose a moonlit night and ask a few friends to gather with me before a single blossoming plant, and then, to the sound of soft music, stand in admiration before it and serenade it. Some one quotes softly from Omar, and another pays tribute to his translator in the words of his friend,

> "Thy hand still beckons from the garden-side,
> Through green vine-garlands when the Winter dies."

I should love to go down to Egypt where "the groves shine like green felspar," and like Solomon of old, I would call, "Awake, O north wind and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out," or hastening on to modern days, visit that city of Biskra, the original of "The Garden of Allah," a veritable Arabian Night's place, a garden of magic, of beauty, of peace, as I have read somewhere.

But I am on my way to Italy, the land of my dreams, just stopping by the way at old Greece to see that garden of Homer's where tall trees blossom, pear trees and pomegranates and apple trees with bright fruit, and sweet figs and olives in their bloom. "The fruit of these tress," the poet tell us, "never perisheth, neither faileth winter or summer, enduring through all the year, ever more the West Wind flowing brings some fruits to birth and ripens others. There, too, skirting the furtherest line, are all manner of garden beds, planted trimly, that are perpetually fresh, and therein are two fountains of water, whereof one scatters his streams all about the garden, and the other runs over against it beneath the threshold of the courtyard . . . and thence did the townsfolk draw water. These were the splendid gifts of the gods in the palace of Alcinous."

I must walk, too, through those academic shades where Socrates talked to Plato, discoursing of the beauty and fragrance of the garden retreat, and doing what I have often longed to do—praising the grass. "But the most delightful of all is the grass, which with its gentle slope is naturally adapted to give an easy support to the head as one reclines." Isn't it Shelley who speaks of the lady whose "step seemed to pity the grass it prest"?

Then there's that Theophrastus who, in the fourth century B. C., made his generous gift to certain of his friends: "As to my garden, the walk and the houses adjacent to the garden, I give them in perpetuity to those of my friends mentioned below, who desire to devote themselves in common to study and philosophy therein, for every one cannot always travel . . . They shall own it in common as a sacred possession and shall enjoy it peaceably and amicably as is just and fitting." He directs that he shall be buried in the garden, and that Pompylus, who inhabits the garden, shall keep the custody of it. I wonder if it is in emulation of this old-world donor that our modern novelist, Ibanez, bequeathes his garden estate at Mentone to the writers of the world. These gardens were designed by specialists brought from all over France for the purpose. It is surely a gracious gift.

But now I reach Sicily and visit that lovely city of Taormina, which George E. Woodberry so highly praises in his essay—the city which a friend of mine, who has traveled extensively, thinks the most beautiful she has so far seen. Mr. Woodberry speaks of almond and olive trees clinging and climbing all over the hillsides, but adds that the country is gray to look at because of the masses of natural rock everywhere cropping out. He mentions the prickly pear plants with reddish fruit extruding from the edge of the thick leaves and of patches of wild candytuft and marigolds, as well as humble purple and blue blossoms hanging from the rock crannies, as lending color to the scene, while the blue of the ocean, the white of Etna make gray Taormina a wonder spot. Can we not feel the beauty of the place in "the hesitancy that holds before Spring," of which the author talks: "Each day there are new flowers but larger and coarser of fibre, and it adds a charm to them that I do not know their names. The trees are budding, and here and there, like a wave breaking into foam on a windless sea, an almond has burst into blossom, white and solitary on the gray slopes, and over all the orchards there is the faint suggestion of pale pink, felt more than seen, so vague is it—but it is there." And this is the country of Theocritus whose idyls take us back to the time when the earth was newly created, and a virgin sweetness and freshness pervaded the air.

After visiting the cliff garden, with its hedge of bourgainvilleas glowing with purple blossoms, and the marble well-head overgrown with papyrus, I pass up into Italy, which, despite its artifically and geometrically made gardens, has been called "the Garden of the world." Some one has remarked, however, that if you find a real garden in Italy, "where Art waits upon Nature," the owner is generally an Englishman, or the gardener is a Scotchman. However much one may object to the straight lines and angles, the balustrades and other architectural conceits, there are always the trees, the shrubs, and the flowers,

> "And none that breathe that sweetened air
> But have a gentler thought,
> A gleam of something good and fair,
> Across the spirit brought."

This reminds us of Him who "went into a garden for His strength." And led by Alfred Noyes, we would go in the cool of the evening, "In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He loveth," and touch "the fringes of His garment, in the fading golden glory."

So I pass through the great cities of Italy, visiting the Borghese Gardens and those of Venice, but I leave until the last my beloved Florence, the city of Romola. I think it is Mrs. Browning who says that Florence is the most enchanting city, the most delectable abiding-place in the whole world; she speaks of it as "a garden-ground of vineyard and olive trees sung round by the nightingales day and night."

Looking at my picture of the Boboli Gardens, I read in Beckford's Letters, that they lie behind the Grand Duke's palace, stretched out on the side of a mountain. He says, "I ascended terrace after terrace, robed by a thick underwood of bay and myrtle, and looked up to the cypress groves which spring above the thickets . . . a winding path led me to a green platform overlooking the whole extent of wood, with Florence deep beneath, and the tops of the hills which encircle it jagged with pines, and here and there a convent or villa whitening in the sun."

Willingly would I linger in this Fiorenza, so fitly named "Labella" but my time is nearly up and I must draw my itinerary to a close. I cannot, however, forego a few more imaginary journeys, and one is to far-away India. My guide there is Richard Halliburton. Invisibly, I accompany him to "The

Garden of Immortality," and view that "Crown of the Palace," the Taj Mahal, built by the greatest lover in the world, the Shah Jehan, three hundred years ago, in memory of his queen, Arjemand. I read that the emperor feasted his dying eyes on this marble memorial as he lay in the Jasmine Tower of the Agra fortress, in which he had long been imprisoned by his resentful subjects. For him, according to Mr. Halliburton, the marvelous purity of the dome, rising two hundred feet into the air, the scintillant beauty of the precious stones with which it was studded, the grace and delicacy of its minarets, all typified the charm and grace of his beloved, and he was glad the time had come when he was to lie buried beside her in the magnificent sepulchre, which seems to possess a soul.

Upon the grandeur of this " marble poetry," the beauty of the gardens surrounding it, the whole miraculous air of the place, I dream awhile before turning to read those quaint and delightful series of letters to an unknown friend, written by Mrs. Boyle, but signed "Sylvana." And sylvan they are, cheerful, woodsy, pine-crowned, and with the sound of the sweet shepherd's pipe running through them. With E. V. B. we say, "It is well to have a little Island of Dreams, far away in some crystal sea; to spread our wings and take flight, and seek the place where all is hallowed and gracious and full of innocent pleasure." With her, too, we turn to that lovely garden poem of Shelley's, "The Sensitive Plant," and read again

"The sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,
Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which, drooping as day drooped too
Fell into pavilions, white, purple and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew."

Another book I am very fond of is Alice Morse Earle's "Old Time Gardens." It is a delight from cover to cover. In it she tells of beautiful American gardens: of Longfellow's, which was laid out in parterres patterned after those at Versailles; of the roses of our historians, Bancroft and Parkman; of the lovely old gardens in Rhode Island and other New England states; of old gardens in the South, notably the Dahlia Walk at Ravensworth, Virginia; of the Shakespeare Border at Hillside, near Albany, New York. It is Mrs. Earle, too, who speaks of Thomas Edward Brown and his one beautiful bit of verse—let me quote it for you:

> "A Garden is a lovesome thing, God wot;
> Rose plot,
> Fringed pool,
> Ferned grot,
> The veriest school of Peace,
> And yet the fool
> Contends that God is not in gardens.
> Not in gardens! When the eve is cool,
> Nay, but I have a sign,
> 'Tis very sure God walks in mine."

Then there's Mrs. Wright's "The Garden of a Commuter's Wife," which is also a joy. It is pleasant to have one's nature lessons taught in such a delightful way.

And don't you love "Elizabeth and her German Garden"? Even the mistakes please me, for they make stepping stones to an eventually perfect garden; and how I sympathize with the author's craving to be alone with nature—a solitude a deux which, at times, seems compellingly necessary to all of us. Even children feel it, as witness that charming little book of Miss Barbara Follet's "The House Without Windows."

Perhaps you have read Edward Sheldon's play, "The Garden of Paradise," based on Hans Andersen's fairy tale, "The Little Mermaid," in which the queen sends to her lover-king great baskets heaped with flowers: star jasmine from the vines that frame her windows, wistaria that veils her palace walls, pomegranate flowers as red as pigeon's blood, and sacred lilies. It is in this play that we read,

> "A voice in the wind that blows
>   From the land beyond the sea,
> Has sung to every rose
>   The song it sings to me—
>
> To the white rose on my breast,
>   To the butterflies and bees,
> To the little birds that nest
>   Among the apple trees."

And it is here, too, that one exclaims, "These stairs lead up to Paradise! I smell the flowers of God." Have you not felt nearer to God when standing or walking in a garden? Then echo with me the old poet's chant, "Et in Arcadia ego!"

Doubtless you have your favorite garden books, essays or stories; and as for poems, were not gardens made that the poets might eulogize them?

Are there certain flowers that you love?

> "Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight:
> With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
> And taper fingers catching at all things
> To bind them all about with tiny rings.
>
> "And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
> Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
> That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
> Through their pavilions of tender green;
>
> And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest,
> Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
> Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
> The soul of her beauty and love lay bare."

What a lovely pastime it would be to gather nosegays from our favorite poets! Let's do it some time for the good of our souls; in the meantime let us pray Robert Frost's prayer:

> "Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers today;
> And give us not to think so far away
> As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
> All simply in the springing of the year.
> Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
> Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
> And make us happy in the happy bees,
> The swarm dilating round the perfect trees."

Finally, read Amy Lowell's sonnet, "A little garden on a bleak hillside," and take heart of grace to plant a garden, however small or poorly placed, and let your faith work wonders therein. It may come to pass that it will mean to you

> "A little garden, loved with a great love,"

and the perfume of its flowers may be as your soul's incense to God.

DAILY BREAD*

A DRAMA OF DOMESTIC LIFE IN ONE ACT

By Josephine Henry Whitehouse

Place—Hitt's *home, Furnald's Crossing, Long Island.*

Time—*A late winter afternoon. Present.*

Dramatis Personae

Magdalen Hitt
Roger Hitt
Carolyn Tate
Phyllis
Lily

This is a triangular set with doors Left and Right, the latter into the outside hall. The Hitt's *living room is furnished like a thousand other rooms, in cheap oak, pseudo art stuff, etc. belonging to the middle class, or rather those who can't afford the refinements of life or the luxury of domestic service.*

The curtain rises upon Magdalen, *a wife as in a thousand other homes, sitting with her white sewing by the table Right front, waiting for the wage earner's return from the city.* Magdalen *is frail looking and appears unhappy. She sighs and drops her work in her lap. We hear a key off stage Left and the slamming of a door. This doorway could be merely arched without sliding door. Presently* Roger Hitt, *a stout, rather putty faced man, stands in the doorway, looking in to the sitting room.* Magdalen *starts as door slams and turns.*

Magdalen.—That you, Roger? (*There is a mournful note in her voice, but instead of answering* Roger *disappears.* Magdalen *picks up her sewing again with a sigh.* Roger *enters the room divested of overcoat and hat, lays a package on the table, fusses with some pamphlets after putting down the evening paper, but ignores his wife.*) (*Suddenly.*) I had to send for Lily to wash, Roger. I felt so ill today. (*She hesitates, then finally musters up her courage.*) Before you go will you leave her money?

(Roger Hitt *ignores this remark, presently glares fiercely at*

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MAGDALEN *whose eyes are cast down on her work and exits left.* MAGDALEN *drops her sewing in her lap dejectedly,* LILY, *the negress enters door Right.*)

Lily.—I done brung in all de wash, Miss Hitt, ma'am—Does you want I should come tomorrer to iron?

Magdalen.—No, Lily. I always do the pressing myself. I hope I'm not going to come down with the flu . . . (MAGDALEN *listens a moment for a sound outside.*) Would you mind waiting for your money, till Mr. Hitt comes?

Lily (*Goodnaturedly*).—Suttinly not, Mis' Hitt, ma'am.

Magdalen (*Nervously*).—Lily, I want you to do me a favor . . .

Lily (*Eagerly*).—I be mighty glad, Mis' Hitt, Ma'am . . .

Magdalen.—Ask Mr. Hitt for your money (pause) when he comes in . . .

Lily.—Ise to tackle boss hisself, is I?

Magdalen.—Yes, Lily. (*Pause.*) I'm sorry you have to wait—I should have asked him for it before he left—this morning. (MAGDALEN *is plainly flustered, and hesitates.*)

Lily.—Mis' Hitt, I knows how tings be—You-all doan hab to play act wid Lilybelle. You want I should tackle boss 'cause you ain't talkin' none to him yerself. (MAGDALEN *remains silent.*) I kin start de cookin', Mis' Hitt, ma'am, so long's I got to wait a spell . . .

Magdalen.—That's kind of you, Lily but the butcher hasn't been yet. (LILY *picks up the paper package on the table.*)

Lily.—What-all's dis?

Magdalen.—See if that's the meat. (LILY *opens it.*)

Lily.—Yassir, dat's what, ma'am. (*Pause.*) Will I put de beef steak on to cook?

Magdalen.—Perhaps, Lily, you'd best not—You won't get paid for extra time . . .

Lily.—Now doan you fuss yourself, Mis' Hitt, ma'am. Lily tend to tings al' right. Lawdy! deys some folks you jes got to help an' deys odders—Doan you worrit yerself none, Mis' Hitt—I'll take a look in de ice box . . . (*There is a loud peal of the door bell.* MAGDALEN *rises nervously.*)

Magdalen.—I'm home to no one, Lily.

Lily.—Doan you fret none, Mis'.

—(LILY *exits Left while* MAGDALEN *fusses with paper.*) (*Off stage.*) Missis ain't home! No 'am.

Caroline (*Off stage*).—She's home to me—her best friend.

Lily (*Off stage*).—A ole fren, is you? Take yerself right in—missis in yonder. (CAROLYN TATE *enters in a neat tailor made. She rushes over to* MAGDALEN.)

Carolyn.—Magdalen, I've been trying to get in for perfect ages. (*She kisses* MAGDALEN.) But you know what a busy life I lead now John is housed with his heart. He's had to give up his position so now I'm the man of the house.

Magdalen.—How dreadfully hard for you, Carolyn, dear.

Carolyn.—Well, we all have our troubles, I'm thankful that John has never carried on with other women like Harriet's husband, and he's the best natured soul alive. (CAROLYN *talks on and* MAGDALEN *seats herself.*) There's a good chance of my getting a raise soon the manager says.

Magdalen.—Sit down. Carrie, you must be tired. (CAROLYN *sits down wearily.*)

Carolyn.—You can't imagine how wearing it is to earn your daily bread, day in and day out. (*She sighs*). You see, Lena, you've always been a parasite, in a way. Before you married Roger your father looked after you and now it's your husband.

Magdalen.—It's human I suppose to be envious. Carolyn, I actually envy you your work. And to think you get your pay envelope every Saturday! Housewives work like slaves and what do they get?

Carolyn.—Freedom from worry, my dear. You're always assured a roof over your head. Why Lena, you don't know what it means to join the weary tread-mill of the workers! (*Lightly.*) Well, every back is fitted to its burden and after all I have untold blessings, even if John is an invalid. (*Pause.*) Now, tell me about yourself. Why do you and Roger never come over to see us any more? It's exactly two years since I've set eyes on him.

Magdalen.—Oh! Roger goes nowhere now. He's too tired when he comes back from the city.

Carolyn.—He never used to mind running over and playing a few hands of Bridge with us. But of course you're terribly out of the world here.

Magdalen.—As a matter of fact we go nowhere now.

Carolyn (*Suddenly*).—So it's true what I've heard? Lena, aren't you and Roger hitting if off so well as you used to?

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Talking doesn't help, Carrie. It only makes it harder. If it hadn't been for Phyllis . . . no never mind . . . I forgot myself.

Carolyn.—But what of Phyllis . . . She's at boarding school and she always stays with your mother holidays, doesn't she?

Magdalen.—Roger is Phyllis' father—he can't help it that he was born mean. (*Pause.*) I'm sorry . . . it slipped out . . . I didn't intend saying anything. Roger was so terribly poor when he was a boy that even a dime means so much . . . I suppose it was all my fault . . . I *was* extravagant when I first married . . . you see I was accustomed to father's free ways with money . . .

Carolyn (*Suddenly*).—It's just as I suspected. Lena, has he never give you an allowance?

Magdalen (*With intensity*).—I've never had a dollar in my hands that I could call my own since I married. (*Emotionally.* Oh! Carrie . . . don't listen please . . . I shouldn't have spoken . . . Roger can't help being himself . . . I've felt terribly depressed today . . .

Carolyn.—Lena, you poor dear, and here I've been complaining when I have so many blessings. Why I don't think your mother even suspects.

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Don't tell her, Carrie . . . please don't . . . I couldn't bear her to know . . . I suppose I have false pride . . . (*Meditatively.*) Mother must wonder why I've not been near her . . . it hasn't been neglect . . . It's because I never have a cent in my purse . . . I know she thinks me niggardly . . . She gives Phyllis so much and I've never given her a present in twenty years . . . not since the day I was married.

Carolyn.—The trouble with you, Lena, is you're too gentle and a man like Roger needs to be bossed about. I should just like to see him try to keep me without a cent when I slaved for him the way you do.

Magdalen.—Carrie, do forget all I've said. I'm not the whining kind but I was feeling pretty low when you came in. I always run high fevers—I felt as if I might be coming down with flu. If I did I don't know what would become of me.

Carolyn (*Indignantly*).—You don't mean Roger wouldn't allow you to have a nurse? Why he has a prosperous business.

Magdalen.—I might not be sick enough for that . . . but . . . (*Pause.*) Never mind . . . why cross bridges till we come to them . . . Now I've unburdened my mind I feel ever so much better.

Carolyn.—I could stop over dinner with you . . . you see Mary's with John till eight. But isn't Roger coming home soon? (MAGDALEN *glances apprehensively towards hall.*)

Magdalen.—I hardly know . . . when he'll be back . . .

Carolyn (*Vehemently*).—Oh! Lena, so it's as bad as that! I don't see why you put up with it. It's time you stood up on your hind legs and kicked. You never get anything in this world till you do. There are so many people that push and elbow their way to what they want . . . You see I've had to learn that since I took this job . . . (*Pause.*) And men respect you more for not being put upon . . . they say they like them timid, but you'll find when there's any picking to be done they steer straight for the other kind.

Magdalen.—I wonder if you're right, Carrie—I wonder. (*Wildly.*) If Roger had really loved me, do you think he could have let five dollars come between us the way it has?

Carolyn (*Surprised*).—Five dollars!

Magdalen.—There—I've gone and told you—I didn't mean to—but two years is a long time—'twas a birthday present—his—I knew he wanted that book in the worst way so I took the money he left for a C. O. D.

Carolyn.—How trivial, Lena dear, I am sorry I said what I did—Forget it, will you, dear?

Magdalen.—He was so angry I never told him what I bought with the money. The book is still in my bureau drawer . . . it's been in the wrapping paper ever since . . . (*Wildly.*) I keep repeating to myself I'm no Christian or I'd forgive seventy times seven . . . (*Wistfully.*) I would if he'd speak to me.

Carolyn.—You don't mean things have reached that point? Now see here, Lena. We have a spare room and you're coming right back with me this minute . . . John will be delighted . . . he loves company and he has so little. He's always been fond of you . . . in fact at times I was inclined to be jealous.

Magdalen.—Oh . . . I couldn't . . . what if Phyllis should come? She's been at mother's four days . . .

Carolyn.—And you haven't seen her?

Magdalen.—Mother asked me over to lunch the morning Phyllis arrived. I had to make some excuse . . . always excuses . . . Oh! I suppose I'm far from a Christian or I'd humble my pride . . . but somehow mother makes it difficult when she lauds Roger so . . . (*Door bell clangs loudly.*)

Carolyn.—Don't get up, Lena, I'll go.

Magdalen.—I can see no one but Phyllis . . . I'm out to everyone else . . . (CARÁLYN *stands a moment, then exits Left.* MAGDALEN *sits nervously twisting her fingers in her lap and then becomes taut as she hears voice off.*)

Carolyn (*Off stage*).—Phyllis! (*There is a sound of kissing.*)

Phyllis (*Off stage*).—Why Mrs. Tate . . . I haven't seen you in ever so long—Where's mother?

(MAGDALEN *brightens, then slumps down in her chair as* PHYLLIS *comes in like a hurricane.*) Mother, dear, is anything wrong? It's such ages—since I've seen you . . . (PHYLLIS *rushes over to hug her mother, then* MAGDALEN *rises and holds her off.*)

Magdalen.—Perhaps you'd better not, dear. I feel rather seedy—

Phyllis.—Then that's why you've not been near us? Why didn't you phone? You see I had to go to town two days for clothes and grandma thought it would be simpler for you to come to us. We almost took the train over yesterday but Nancy and Peg came in and we couldn't make it. (MAGDALEN *puts her hand on her daughter's shoulder.*)

Magdalen.—Let me see you, child. My! how you've grown. (*Pause.*) Do you realize I haven't seen you since Christmas?

Phyllis.—That's your own fault, mother. Why don't you ever come to school? All the other mothers do. (MAGDALEN *has dropped her hand and turned away.*)

Carolyn.—Don't put your mother thru a catechism tonight, Phyllis. She's not feeling herself.

Phyllis.—But, mother, why didn't you phone or write if you can't make time to come to Babylon? It's such a dinky little trip . . . and if you take a jitney from the station . . . (*Pause.*) I'd have given up those two days shopping in the city if I'd known. And grandma is worried about you. She says you never come near her and she feels it's your place to come because she's so lame with her sciatica . . . .

Magdalen.—I know, Phyllis, if I only could . . . My house-work keeps me so confined . . . (*Hesitating.*) I'm a poor manager, or I could make some free time for myself.

Phyllis (*interrupting*).—I can't understand why father makes you work so hard, mother. We're not as poor as all that.

Magdalen.—Wages are terribly high, child. (*Suddenly.*) Phyllis, is your grandmother paying for your new clothes?

Phyllis (*Indignantly*).—Certainly not. Father sent me a nice fat cheque . . . That's why I don't understand your slaving so over housework . . .

Magdalen (*Wistfully*).—Never mind, dear. There are lots of things in life we can't understand.

Carolyn.—I've quite made up my mind, Lena. I'm going to call a taxi and take you home with me.

Phyllis.—But what about father?

Carolyn (*Shortly*).—He can look after himself.

Magdalen.—You don't know him, Carrie. Roger's the most helpless person in creation when it comes to cooking even an egg . . .

Carolyn (*Indignantly*).—Then give him a chance to miss you. You've made yourself too cheap all these years, Magdalen. (*Pause.*) And don't come back unless he accepts your terms.

Magdalen.—But Carolyn, that's just it . . . Marriage isn't a business partnership. It should be a labour of love.

Carolyn.—Is yours a labour of love or isn't it rather one of duty?

Phyllis.—But, mother, what does Mrs. Tate mean? Aren't you happy with father? Is something wrong? Is that why I've stayed always with grandma in the summer and vacations? (*There is a heavy silence.*) My intuitions weren't at fault then . . .

Magdalen.—Never mind, daughter.

Phyllis (*Vehemently*).—But don't you see I must know. (Lily *bursts into room door Right with hat and coat on.*)

Lily.—Ise shoo nuff sorry I can't wait no longer nohow, Mis' Hitt ma'am. (*Pause.*) Reckon I kin wait fer de money if boss ain't home yet.

Magdalen.—Lily, I am sorry . . . I wouldn't have had you come today if I'd known . . .

Lily (*Grins*).—It ain't no shakes nohow. I knows as how de money's safe, I does . . .

Phyllis.—How absurd, mother. Why don't you pay her?

Magdalen.—I happen to be short . . . I've only a dime . . .

Phyllis.—Not really! I suppose you've been extravagant and paid out a lot on a C. O. D. (*The girl opens her purse.*)

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Don't, not you too, Phyllis.

Phyllis.—How much, Lily?

Lily (*Grinning*).—Three dollar, missy . . .

Magdalen.—No, Phyllis . . . You won't see that money again . . . Your father . . .

Phyllis.—Nonsense. There's more where this came from. (*Twinkling.*) You see I take after father.

Magdalen (*Fervently*).—Heaven forbid!

Phyllis.—I'm economical . . . but you must be fearfully extravagant, you old dear . . . (*She gives her mother a hug.*)

Carolyn.—Never mnd, Phyllis . . . Pay Lily for your mother . . . (PHYLLIS *hands the bills to the negress who bobs from the waist.*)

Lily.—Tank you, lil missy . . . Ise much obleeged. (*To* MAGDALEN.) Good night, Mis' Hitt ma'am. Hopes as you feels better tomorrow . . . Does you want I should come over next week?

Magdalen.—No, Lily—I'll manage.

Lily.—Dat kinder big wash for you-all when you doan feel good . . .

Phyllis.—Mother, you don't do all the washing yourself? Why you're not nearly strong enough . . . That's why you look so pale . . . (*Vehemently.*) Well, I'm going to wait to see father. I'd far rather go without some pretty dresses than have you slave like that . . . (*Pause.*) Who does the ironing?

Magdalen.—Never mind, dear. I'll feel stronger tomorrow.

Phyllis.—Lily, you're to come tomorrow to finish up . . .

Magdalen.—No, Lily. . . (*To* PHYLLIS.) Please, child, don't interfere . . .

Phyllis.—Lily, did you hear me?

Lily (*Grinning*).—Yas, missy honey, I shoo do.

Magdalen (*Wildly*).—But I don't know where the money's coming from, Phyllis . . .

Phyllis.—Father of course. It's time he had a talking to, don't you think so, Mrs. Tate?

Magdalen.—If Lily comes she may lose a chance of a day's work somewhere else . . .

Phyllis (*Smiling*).—Certainly she can't be in two places at once.

Lily.—Ise acomin' early in de mornin, Mis' Hitt, ma'am. (LILY *exits Left and we hear off stage.*) Excuse, boss. (PHYLLIS *wanders over to the window Right back and is concealed partially by the curtains. The other women remain silent.*)

Roger (*Off stage*).—Darnation! What you doing here? I told you last time, Lily, you wouldn't get paid unless . . .

Lily (*Interrupting*).—I got my pay right yere, boss (*She chuckles.*)

Roger (*Off stage*).—Where in hell . . . (*Door slams off cutting the remainder of* ROGER'S *speech. He enters and turns to* CAROLYN TATE.) So you've taken to paying Magdalen's debts for her, Carolyn? (CAROLYN *ignores the remark.*)

Carolyn (*Lightly*).—How are you, Roger?

Roger.—Pretty fair. How's John?

Carolyn.—He's had a dreadful siege with his heart . . . the doctor says he can't go back to his position . . .

Roger.—Poor old chap. Tell him I'm mighty sorry for him. (PHYLLIS *emerges from window.*) Well, see who's here. Little Phyllis. Why I didn't recognize you, you're so dressed up. It's that hat covers your face . . . (ROGER *tries to kiss* PHYLLIS *but she holds back.*)

Phyllis (*Belligerently*).—Father, what have you been doing to mother? Why do you make her work like a slave and give me everything?

Roger (*Suspiciously*).—See here, has your mother . . .

Phyllis (*Curtly*).—No, she hasn't . . .

Roger.—Why don't you wait for my question?

Magdalen.—Phyllis, you'll find me in the kitchen. I've the dinner to see to . . . (*She is about to exit Right when* CAROLYN *catches hold of her arm.*)

Carolyn.—No, Lena. (*To* ROGER.) Roger, Lena's coming home with me . . . What she needs is a good rest . . . She's all in . . . that's why she sent for Lily . . .

Roger (*Angrily*).—I don't see that Magdalen is any concern of yours, Carolyn. She can have every attention at home.

Phyllis.—Father, I spoke to you . . .

Roger.—Now, Phyllis, don't try to put your nose in things that don't concern you . . . Your mother has no conception of the value of money . . . When we first married and she began to throw it about I stepped in . . .

Phyllis (*Interrupting*).—Father, I always thought you were absolutely just. Mrs. Tate didn't pay Lily. I did because mother had only a dime in her purse. Why is she so short?

Roger.—So that's what they teach you in these new fangled boarding schools? To question your own father? I've been ready to pay anything in reason . . . she can charge things in town . . . I work hard for every cent I make . . .

Phyllis.—Do you work harder than other men?

Carolyn (*Casually*).—Or women for that matter . . .

Phyllis.—Is mother entitled to nothing slaving for you day after day?

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Won't you listen, Roger? For two years I've tried to tell you . . . (*There is an ominous silence.*)

Phyllis.—Father, aren't you going to answer mother? (ROGER *looks sullenly at the floor.*)

Carolyn.—As one of Lena's oldest friends, Roger, I'm going to give you a piece of my mind. There is a cruelty that is worse than a physical blow and how Magdalen has stood your treatment for fifteen years . . .

Magdalen.—No, Carrie, it's only two years Roger has refused to speak to me . . .

Phyllis.—So you're that kind of a fiend, father?

Roger (*With dignity*).—Remember, Phyllis there are two sides to every quarrel. You've heard only one side . . .

Phyllis.—But I haven't. It's like pulling a tooth to get a word out of mother.

Magdalen.—Phyllis, child, don't . . .

Roger (*Interrupting*).—Are all you people crazy? I didn't prevent your mother from doing what she chose?

Carolyn (*Sweetly*).—But you prevented it quite effectively, Roger.

Magdalen.—The last time I went to mother's was two months ago . . . You see I haven't felt equal to the exertion of walking that five miles from the station . . .

Roger (*Sulkily*).—Then why didn't your mother ask me for the money? (*This is addressed to* PHYLLIS.)

Phyllis.—Why did you never give her an allowance?

Roger.—It would have landed us in the poor house. (*Heatedly.*) Phyllis, I've been too darn patient listening to your catichism . . .

Magdalen (*Wistfully*).—I would so like to tell you, Roger, how I spent that five dollars . . .

Roger (*To* Phyllis).—Tell your mother to fire away. Much good it'll do her.

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Don't you remember the book you were so crazy to read? Roger!

Roger (*Indifferently*).—Good Lord! Phyllis, how can she expect me . . .

Magdalen (*Interrupting*).—You can't really have forgotten, . . .

Roger (*To* Mrs. Tate).—Carolyn, how should I recollect a book I wanted to read two years ago? I lead a busy life.

Magdalen.—It was Fox's Book of Martyrs!

Roger.—Well, what of it? (*Unconsciously* Roger *has answered his wife.*)

Magdalen.—I bought it for your birthday . . .

Roger.—Now, you see how utterly foolish your expenditures are, Magdalen. I got it from the library in the city for nothing.

Phyllis.—Father, how can you?

Roger.—You see what an infant your mother is where money is concerned! Waste—useless—

Carolyn (*Interrupting*).—But how can anyone learn the value of money when they are never given a cent?

Roger.—Can't she charge things?

Carolyn.—And how was she to get into town without leisure or money? (Phyllis *advances and puts her arm round her mother.*)

Phyllis.—Come away out of this, mother.

Magdalen (*Wildly*).—I told you—for your sake, dear . . . O what's the use!

Phyllis.—For my sake you're going where you'll be treated like a human being. Grandma has loads of room . . .

Roger (*Angrily*).—No, Phyllis, you can't come between me and your mother . . .

Carolyn.—My God! Roger, has anything but your cold bloodedness come between you? (*To* Phyllis.) You're right, child. This is no place for your mother. ((*Pause.*) Where are your hat and coat, Lena? I'll go up and pack a satchel . . .

Roger.—If you leave, Magdalen, there's no coming back.

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Phyllis, your father hasn't been a bad husband as men go . . . (*She begins to sob into her handkerchief. Weakening.*) Perhaps, I'd better stay . . .

Carolyn.—No, Lena, I shan't leave you under Roger's roof another night!

Roger (*To Magdalen*)—One would think I had committed a crime to hear you two go on . . .

Carolyn.—Make up your mind whether you're coming with me or going to your mother . . .

Roger (*In bullying manner*).—This decision is final, Magdalen. (*Pause.*) Don't come whining to be taken back.

Phyllis.—You're coming with me, mother. Grandma will be so pleased.

Magdalen.—Perhaps I'd best go with Mrs. Tate, Phyllis, and break the news to grandma gently . . .

Roger.—So you've made up your mind to desert me? I didn't think you had the guts!

Magdalen (*Emotionally*).—Oh! oh! how terrible.

Roger (*Vehemently*).—I don't want ever to see your face again.

Phyllis.—Why mother's done nothing, father. She's too gentle.

Roger (*Bitterly*).—I might have known you'd side with your mother.

Phyllis (*Curtly*).—So that's why you gave me those big cheques . . . to have me on your side . . .

Magdalen.—No, dear, I'm sure your father isn't calculating. Remember in spite of appearances he loves you . . .

Phyllis (*Sadly*).—And he loved you once, and now it's come to this . . .

Roger.—Don't attempt to judge things of which you know nothing, Phyllis. You're only a child.

Phyllis (*Indignantly*).—I'm nearly fifteen. And one doesn't live to that age without learning a few things about life!

Roger.—I should have known what would happen when you went to boarding school. That's your mother's doings.

Magdalen (*Emotionally*)—You know why I sent her, Roger—I couldn't bear her to hear . . . to see—

Roger.—Well, has it prevented her from finding out? (ROGER *walks off door Left scowling.*)

Carolyn (*Meditatively*).—Poor Lena, the worst of it is that Roger comes out ahead.

Phyllis.—But Mrs. Tate, haven't we rescued her?

Magdalen (*Helplessly*).—I fear, Carrie, between us we've put him in a terrible temper.

Carolyn.—It's like this, Magdalen, unfortunately you can't get a divorce . . .

Magdalen (*Interrupting*).—Divorce . . . Good heavens! Carrie . . .

Carolyn (*Continuing*).—Statutory grounds are the only grounds for divorce in this state!

LINES FOR THE NEW YEAR

By Louise Crenshaw Ray

I will sweep my sordid dwelling,
Despoiling every wall
Of gaudy wreath and garland
Where my heart held festival.

I'll cast away the idol
Illusion clothed for me;
And with my lightened conscience
Dwell in lone piety.

But when spring buds shall burn and flame
Like living, swaying fire,
Will pagan adoration
Bring back the old desire?

EZRA POUND'S "BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE"

By Katherine Buxbaum

Anthologies of recent poetry include so many poems in which the Christ theme is treated with beauty and power that one is surprised, a little, at what appears to be the essential spirituality of "these moderns." Certain poems dealing with Christ's passion reflect an almost medieval interest in the dramatic spectacle of the crucifixion. Others attest the magnetic force of an unusual personality, and to this class belongs Ezra Pound's "Ballad of the Goodly Fere," which, expressing as it does, a familiar aspect of Jesus' character, is the more appealing by reason of its unique language. In this ballad Mr. Pound has boldly made Simon Zelotes, an obscure member of The Twelve, an Anglo-Saxon, who speaks the vernacular of "ballad days" though speaking it "somewhile after the Crucifixion." Why not? Certainly a literal instead of a literary transcription of the speech of Jesus' companions would have the racy flavor of the talk of the masses. And while it would be no more historically possible for Simon to speak thus than it would be for him to use the English of King James' day, yet the employment of the homelier idiom is convincing to a marked degree.

"Fere" is a term Scriptural enough .The Rushworth gloss on Matthew's Gospel (tenth century), designed as these glosses were, to assist the clergy in interpreting the Scriptures to illiterate laymen, gives this word for companion or mate. One fancies that the word has an intimate connotation. Even at this distance "the goodly fere" suggests loyalty and tenderness. Other words are in keeping: Simon assures us that the goodly fere was "no capon priest," nor yet a "mouse of the scrolls," but a "man o' men, who aye loved the open sea." In mentioning the storm on Genessaret the speaker recalls that the sea was cowed "wi' twey words spoke' suddenly." We read that friends drank his "Hale" in the good red wine, and for the moment Jesus walks in ancient England as well as in Jewry. And this virile stanza startles but does not offend:

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere
"Or I'll see ye damned!" says he.

We have not read it thus, but we recognize the right of each to speak in his own tongue. Moreover Simon, who appears to resent somewhat the early attempts to record the Life, declares:

They'll no' get him a' in a book, I think,
Though they write it cunningly;

One line in the poem, beautiful and strong as it is, is too literary for the rest of the verses. In describing the scenes which accompanied the agony on the cross the speaker says:

The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue.

But such lapses are welcome, when they enhance, as does this one by a perfect figure, the effect of a poem.

CUPS BREAK

Miss Mary Carolyn Davies

Open for joy like a cup that cries to be filled,
Like a breaking bud that has never yet felt the dew,—
So I looked up at the world with my heart unstilled
By any hurt. And you saw me thus and willed
That my heart should be full as a cup is full; but you
Forgot that the hand that pours out joy, pours pain.
Now I know; and the draught I spill on the sands, but again
You seek me to give me joy. Have you not been told
(Ah see!) that a broken cup can nothing hold?

MORE ABOUT APPLES

AN OLD LEGEND IN MODERN DRESS

(*One Act Play*)

By A. H. Phipps

Time: *The Present*

Place: *An Apple Orchard—just trees and a convenient log.*

Characters

Pomona, *who knows she will not marry*
Vertumnus, *who knows she will*
An Old Woman, *who is doubtful*

Scene I

(Pomona *is seated on the log. She is dressed as you like, looks as you like her to, but whether you like it or not, she is very graceful and very irritated. One foot is tapping slightly.*)

(*Enter* Vertumnus, *again—clad as you like, looking as you like, but whether you like it or not, clever, gay and irrevocably late. He is whistling.*)

Vertumnus.—Ah—there you are, Pom dear,—I almost didn't see you.

(Pomona *is speechless. What can she say?*)

Vertumnus.—Now Pomona, why silence? Can you, like the shy baby, have "lost your tongue"? And you look *so* homely with your mouth shut!

Pomona (*Suddenly*).—You're late. You're half an hour late. You're late again. You're *always* late!

Vertumnus.—Is that it? Poor Pommy—I—

Pomona.—Stop talking that way. You make me sick. I hate you, I tell you! I hate you. (*Getting enthralled with the idea.*) I hate you!

Vertumnus.—Now, Pomona, repetition is very effective, but I got it the first time. You hate me. That was the idea, wasn't it? I expected it. You hate all men.

Pomona.—Yes, I do. (*Still enthralled by the idea.*) I hate 'em all—they all make me sick, and you make me sickest! I hate you—I—

Vertumnus (*Mocking her*).—I hate you—I tell you, I hate You! Now, Pomona, you're an infernal liar.

Pomona.—You—beast!

Vertumnus.—Now try, old hag,—do try to be original. A 'beast'? Can't you do better than that?

Pomona.—How dare you call me a hag? You—you—

Vertumnus.—Beast! Pommy dear, and the chorus is: "I hate you, I hate you, I tell you—I hate you". You could sing it to "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms". It would go—da da dum da dum-dum da dum dum—yes, it fits nicely. "Believe me, I hate you, I hate you I tell you—(*singing*) You pause a long while on *tell* and it will fit beautifully. Let's sing it, already? Now! "Believe—

Pomona (*Choking with rage*).—Vertumnus, I'll kill you! I swear I will. I—

Vertumnus.—Now, Pom dear—just when I was getting "I hate you, I tell you" set to music you have to give me a new line. "I'll kill you, I swear I will".

Pomona (*Weeping with rage, her head in her hands*).—Oh, go way. I ha—I mean, go away—go away.

Vertumnus.—Poor Pom! Still hating me? (*Singing*) Believe me, I hate you—

Pomona (*Jumping up*).—Go away, do you hear? Please, Vertumnus, you drive me crazy.

Vertumnus.—Hate—kill—crazy—aren't you being a bit strong,—Darling?

Pomona (*Very suddenly*).—Am I your darling?

Vertumnus.—Of course you are.

Pomona.—Your very own?

Vertumnus.—Of course! Don't you hate me? Want to kill me? Don't I drive you crazy? You must be my darling!

Pomona.—Why do you tease me so?

Vertumnus.—Because you're so teasable. Just now, for instance, when I came in you said: "You're late" and then you started—

Pomona (*Again very suddenly*).—So you were! Half an hour late. You ought to apologize.

Vertumnus.—I don't know how.

Pomona.—Well, I'll teach you. First of all you must be sorry.

Vertumnus.—All right; I'm sorry!

Pomona.—You must *feel* sorry.

Vertumnus.—All right; I feel sorry.

Pomona.—You do *not feel sorry*. No one can feel sorry right off like that!

Vertumnus.—I can. I can feel sorry right off like that! I do, often. When I miss a car. When I see it go, I feel sorry faster than "right off like that". Why, I—

Pomona.—Be serious. I mean you cant feel sorry for having hurt someone's feelings so quickly.

Vertumnus.—Well—it's time enough now. I feel sorry—very, very sorry. What do I do next?

Pomona.—You *tell* me you're sorry and you *mean* it.

Vertumnus.—I *tell* you I'm sorry, and I *mean* it.

Pomona.—Oh! I hate you again, I tell you. Yes, *sing* your nasty old song—go ahead. Only I never wish to see you again, that's all. (*Off she flounces.*)

Vertumnus.—'Bye, Pommy. May I help myself to some apples? 'Aw, look back. Be a nice Lot's wife! (*As she disappears without looking back.*) The crazy darling.

SCENE II

The Orchard: same trees; same log. Morning, two weeks later. POMONA *is picking apples off the ground and putting them into her basket. She is humming. Oddly enough—"Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms."*

Pomona.—Darn it, I'm humming that nasty song Vertumnus made up. I cant get it out of my mind. And here I am, talking out loud to myself. Maybe I'm crazy, like Ophelia—only I'm picking apples, not flowers. Did she pick flowers, or did she only strew 'em? I wish it *were* flowers. I'm sick of tending this old orchard anyhow. If I only knew typing and shorthand I'd leave this damn place and go to New York and get a job! Guess that would show Vertumnus! The old scum! When I'd get a lot of money I'd call him up and very sweetly invite him over to my fine apartment. Then I'd show him! Oh hum—I wonder where he is? Not that I care, though. He can go to—Jericho, for all of me, with all the rest of 'em. Whew, it's hot, *and* these apples are rotten. It's a messy, filthy job, picking them up. It'd be easier to be married, I bet—because at least you wouldn't have to start work at seven o'clock every morning. (*An old woman has entered quietly.*) You could just sleep and let your husband get his own breakfast. Anyhow, there wouldn't be—

Old Woman.—Do you let your husband get his own breakfast?

Pomona (*Dropping apples she has in her hand, and just saving the basket from going down*).—Heavens! You scared me! What did you say?

Old Woman.—I said; do you let your husband get his own breakfast?

Pomona.—Mercy, no. I haven't any husband.

Old Woman.—A pretty lady like you, and no husband! *Did* you have a husband?

Pomona.—Haven't any; never had; never will. Now, who are you, please?

Old Woman (*Ignoring question*).—Never will? Never will have a husband! Why not?

Pomona.—H'm?

Old Woman.—Why will you never have a husband?

Pomona.—Well, I hate 'em. Men, I mean. That's why.

Old Woman.—All men?

Pomona.—Yes, all men, and one more than all the rest. Oh, how I hate *him*.

Old Woman.—Why? (*Very curiously.*)

Pomona.—Well—say, who are you please? And why do you ask so many questions?

Old Woman.—You were going to tell me why you hate this man. Go on.

Pomona.—I shan't say another word until you tell me who you are. (*Sits down firmly on the ground.*)

Old Woman (*Taking a step towards her*).—I'm just a poor old woman. What difference does it make? I have no one to talk to, and you make me happy by telling me about yourself. Now please go on, that's a dear girl.

Pomona.—That's what he says; "That's a dear girl." Oh, dear! (*Looks dreamily into space.*)

Old Woman.—Who says "that's a dear girl"?

Pomona.—Why, the man I hate the most.

Old Woman.—How can you hate him if he calls you nice names like that' Why don't you love him?

Pomona.—How can I love him when I *hate* him? Besides, just a little while ago he told me almost in one breath that I was a dear, looked homely with my mouth shut and that I was his darling! Oh, I hate him. I hope he'll never come back, never, *never*!

Old Woman.—Is he away?

Pomona.—Yes, I told him I never wanted to see him again, and—I guess he believed me. I haven't seen him for two weeks. Well, if Vertumnus stays away forever, he can't make me sorry.

Old Woman.—He will.

Pomona.—Why do you say that? How do *you* know he will?

Old Woman.—Is his name Vertumnus? Is he gay, and always late?

Pomona.—Yes, always late. How do you know that?

Old Woman.—Well, you will be happy. Your old enemy is dead. Vertumnus is dead. Poor man,—poor gay young chap!

Pomona (*Jumping up; shaking the old woman's arm*).—Not dead! Vertumnus dead? Why, I saw him two weeks ago. He can't be! How do you know? How do you know—Oh, Vertumnus!

Old Woman.—I was walking by the river bank when they were pulling him out. I heard them say: "Good God—this is Vertumnus—looks like suicide! Poor chap, he had great possibilities." He was very slender, and quite drowned. Well, some girl is probably weeping while you are rejoicing.

Pomona.—I'm weeping, cant you see? Vertumnus, Vertumnus—are you *sure* they said "Vertumnus"? Oh,—old lady—I don't really hate him, I love him, and I want him. Vertumnus! (*Walking about calling, and turning her back on the old woman.*) Oh, Vertumnus, my dear, come back! (*The old woman is taking off her disguise;* VERTUMNUS *stands revealed.*)

Vertumnus (*In his natural voice*).—Here I am, Pomona. Here I am, darling. That's a dear girl—turn around. "Good God—it's Vertumnus—looks like *not suicide* after all"—

Pomona (*Throwing herself in his arms*).—Oh, Vertumnus,—Oh, my dear, my dear! (*Kissing him.*) Vertumnus! How did you get here?

Vertumnus (*With his arms around her*).—Wasn't that a clever trick? You Darling! That's a dear girl—almost gave myself away by that!

Pomona (*Withdrawing herself*).—Why, where's the old lady?

Vertumnus.—I'm the old lady, you know.

Pomona.—What a low-down trick! Oh, I ha-

Vertumnus.—You do not, you little liar! Darling, you love your slender, drowned Vertumnus. (*Kissing her.*) Now, say you hate me,—"that's a dear girl."

Pomona (*Singing*).—'Believe me, I love you, I love you, I tell you—(*Pausing*) only you *are* a BEAST.

Vertumnus (*Kissing her again*).—Liar!

CURTAIN

RITUAL

BY IRENE STEWART

Whether I weep or whether I sing,
I celebrate a transient thing.

No thing more lasting than a leaf
That has growth-joy and dying-grief.

Oh, it is hard to be content,
Knowing the way last year's leaves went!

I light love's gilded scented tapers
And read from fragile old prayer papers.

I offer masses for my soul—
It kneels down sleepily like a foal.

I am not great enough or free
To prove a god is near to me.

Whether I weep or whether I sing,
I celebrate the transient thing.

ARTHUR WONTNER--ANOTHER FORBES ROBERTSON

BY ARTHUR W. ROW

It is the English habit to make their own discoveries in the theatre. If one wishes to make a pleasing advent on the English stage, no better way can be planned than suddenly to appear there without previous announcement.

How much this had to do with the extraordinarily quiet debut of Arthur Wontner on the American stage is not known, but the fact remains that when he stepped upon the Empire Theatre stage in "The Captive," he was a complete stranger to these shores. In England he has been known for some time as an actor of distinction, but as far as American audiences were concerned, he was an absolutely unknown quantity.

In a role that would make little stir with the ordinary actor, Wontner somehow managed in his quiet and telling way to create a profound impression on the first night audience, at least judging by the applause, for after his exit in the big scene there was an ovation from the audience. Another actor had arrived! A new personality was before the public!

After the untimely and regrettable closing of "The Captive," regrettable because it was really a fine play done in a superb manner, Wontner disappeared for a period to reappear in "Mariners," with Pauline Lord. Here again he scored and now in "Interference," he is the only actor in the company who gets a reception on his first entrance, and this with as fine an actor as A. E. Matthews in the cast!

Wontner has a personality all his own and yet he resembles Forbes Robertson strongly. He is grave in demeanor, scholarly and patrician, but not dull. He is blessed with a delightful sense of humor. There should be much for him to do in America and his stay here will probably be permanent.

When I sought him out at his hotel, it was not easy to get him to talk. He was courtesy itself in receiving me, yet most unactorlike in his disregard of the personal equation. In all queries, even in regard to his art, one felt somehow that the realm of good taste had been invaded and the interview was something that was abhorrent to the fiber of his constitution.

He is not handsome in the ordinary sense, but his audiences are not unaware of the pervading charm. He is certainly the most interesting personality England has sent to America since George Arliss struck these shores.

I asked him if he noticed any difference between American and English audiences and Mr. Wontner said he had found none. He stressed the fact that American audiences had demanded his best and seemed to appreciate what he tried to do.

His plans for the future outside of "Interference," are not in any way defined but like all good actors he expressed a desire to direct and produce fine plays.

Before coming to America, Wontner had enjoyed a splendid career on the English stage, having played some of the most important leading parts in recent years. Something of his versatility may be judged from a partial list of the plays in which he registered personal hits: "Peter Pan," "Ben Hur," "Madame X," "Tiger Cats," "Diplomacy," "An Ideal Husband," "Pelleas and Melisande," "Catherine," "Henry VIII," and the London production of the American melodrama, "The Bat."

Wontner made his first success in London under the management of the late Charles Frohman, when as understudy for Sir Gerald DuMaurier, he played "Raffles." Now he is appearing in another Gerald DuMaurier role under the management of Charles Frohman's successor.

Mr. Wontner's horoscope is both interesting and significant. He was born when the Sun was in the first degree of Aquarius, in trine, or luck aspect, to Saturn and to Uranus, chief ruler of his destiny. This indicates unusual dramatic talent and promises Mr. Wontner a career of distinction. Both Venus and Jupiter were "exalted" at the time of his birth. A planet is said to be exalted when it is situated in the sign with which it is most in harmony and it is then very powerful. As Venus and Jupiter are the most beneficient of the planets, Mr. Wontner was born under very harmonious vibrations. Jupiter, moreover, was near the meridian, which made its influence all the more powerful. The Moon was on the horizon in the sign of Scorpio, in trine to Venus and on terms of mutual interest with Jupiter.

Arthur Wontner possesses the understanding of the principles of Art which good vibration from Aquarius gives. He has the dramatic power and rhythmic sense of Cancer and Pisces and the emotional force of Scorpio. He is now under a very favor-able vibration from Uranus and the Sun, which should bring him increasing success and recognition during the next few years.

So, it looks as though Mr. Wontner will bear watching!

ROOTED

By Isabel Neill

Marshaled beneath my windows
Are ranks of talking trees;
At night I hear them gossip
Of ships and sounding seas.

Sometimes they tell of mountains,
Of streams, of wild deer fleet;
Again, they echo faintly
The tramp of marching fleet.

Beneath my silk-hung windows
I sing of white-capped seas
Or tell of hills and battles
Rooted as the trees.

THE TALISMAN

By Alice Williams Brotherton

Stratford, before John Shakespeare's house. Enter Will Shakespeare *in shabby travelling garb, and* Anne *in cap and homespun gown.*

Will.—
One kiss, sweet Nan, and then I must be gone!
Anne.—
How swift the hour goes when we be together;
When we be parted, oh how slow 'twill lag!
Will.—
You would na have me stay?
Anne.—
Nay, nay, dear lad,
'Tis best for thee to goo. Here's naught to earn,
And now five hungry mouths to fill wi' bread.
Will.—
That's my brave lass! I'm loth to leave thee, Sweet.
And would na were there aught in Stratford town
To turn my hand to for the smallest wage.
My feyther's fortunes dwindle day by day;
All trade is dull; I lost the scrivener's job
Because my hand-of-write was all too poor
To be deciphered at a hasty glance,
And cost yon blundering barrister his case.
Anne.—
I would not have thee sink into a hind,
A loutish farm-hand, or a carter's boy:
The cry of Players coming at this time
To Stratford, seems to open up the way
To Lunnon.
Will.—
Ay, I'm glad to turn my hand
To anything to win to London town;
'Tis luck they need an extra man to lead

The pack-horse with the properties and robes,
Else had I fared along on Shanks his mare.

Anne.—
Dick Burbage, Heminge, and John Condell too,
All these be men o' Warwickshire; wi' these
To friend, belike 'twill not be hard to find
Good lodging.

Will.—
And a foothold's all I ask
To climb to fortune, haply unto fame!
I will but jog with these until I come
There to the printing shop of Richard Field
Our townsman, who will give me some small job
To pay for food and lodging. When he reads
My half-writ poem of the Queen of Love
And her Adonis he'll help me sure to print!

Anne.—
Your Queen o' Love is a bold giglot, Will.
I'd like a verse about some virtuous wife;
Could you not find *one* such wi' all your learnin'?

Will.—
That's for hereafter. What behooves me now
Is just to win to London safe and sound;
I doubt that mare will shy at every bush.

Anne.—
Look to thyself, Will!

Will.—
Ay, I'll take no risks,
I'm none so fond of broken bones or pate.

Anne.—
An ye should fail of findin' work Wi' Field,
Belike you'll fall back on the actin' trade.

Will.—
Never you fash yourself for me, my girl:
A Jack-at-all-Trades, I can lend a hand
At any tinkering about the Stage;
Or even strut it in some minor part,
As heavy Father, or a bend Old Man;
Or, since I have the knack to turn a phrase
And tinkle rhymes together, who shall say
But that perchance the Company at need
May let me patch together some old Play

To fill the gap between two Tragedies,
Or, haply, since they're short of Comedies
Dick Burbage saith, and the Court's taste doth trend
Toward merry quips rather than bloody wars,
Who knows but I could pen some Interlude
To the Queen's taste! some lively skit to play
Before Her Majesty in Greenwich palace?
Anne.—
Who knows, indeed! 'Tis hard to let thee go;
But London road's the only path for thee.
Would I might fare wi' thee to London town!
Will.—
Or would we might, like merry Robin Hood
Take to the Forest! There's a life for men!
Anne.—
But scarce for women, what Maid Marian
As e'er was heard on traipsed the forest aisles
Wi' three fat bairns a-danglin' at her skirts?
For thee and me, lad, such a life were gay;
But how about Susannah and the twins?
Judith's a reckling lass, though Hamnet be
So fat as butter. And bethink thee, Will,
Were I away, what would the old folk do?
Thy mother's none too brash this twelvemonth past;
And for thy Feyther, what wi' work and worry,
He seemeth but the ghost of his old self.
Nay, I must square my shoulders to the load,
Must bake and brew and scour and scrub and sew,
Who has na pence, they say, must pay wi' pains.
I'll be too thronged wi' tasks for foresting!
Will.—
Ay, there's the rub. And since the golden days
Of Sherwood Forest sure the times are changed;
These poaching pranks, I've proved, no more are safe
For the staid father of a family!
Anne.—
Ah Will, dear Will, Stratford's no place for thee.
My heart is sore to think the bairns and I
Are hung like millstones round about thy neck
To weight thee to the ground!
Will.—
Nay, Sweetheart, nay;

No millstone but an anchor firm to keep
My soul from drifting into perilous seas;
Or, like the ballast that doth trim the ship
To perfect balance to outride the storm,
The thought of thee, dear heart, and of our bairns
Will hold me true as needle to the pole
To home and thee, whatever storms may come.

Anne.—

I'll trust thee, dear love, to keep troth wi' me.
Though much I dread yon dainty city dames
Who flourish it in ruff and fardingale
Will better please thine eye than simple Anne
Drudging at homely tasks.

Will.—

Oh, fear me not!
No flaunting gallant shall I seem, my lass,
A rustic oaf, come up to seek my fortune;
Such a one can not take a lady's eye;
And in my heart I wear love's talisman,
The thought of thee, to ward off evil eyes.

Anne.—

A talisman! That minds me o' my whim.
See here's my lucky sixpence! Break it, Will,
To make two tokens, one that each may keep
Like troth-plight lovers. Surely man and wife
Parted may change love-tokens and keep faith.
Now break it through the middle.

(*He breaks the sixpence. She threads ribbon through each hole and hangs one token around his neck. Knotting the ribbon of the second half with clumsy fingers he kisses her and places the coin in her bosom.*)

Will.—

(*Holding her close.*) Keep the troth!
No lips but mine to press these red-ripe lips,
No arms but of our children 'round thy waist.

Anne.—

Oh Will, Will, Will! I pray thee keep the troth!
No form but mine to nestle in thy arms,
No head but mine to lie upon thy breast!

(*Fanfare of trumpets and beat of Players' drum heard without.*)

A Voice.—

Will Shakespeare! Where be'est? Hike for'ard, we're off!

(*With a last embrace* Will *goes off with a springing step.* Anne *starts as if to follow. The cry of a child recalls her to life and duty. Kissing the talisman she passes weeping into the house.*)

THREE EPITAPHS

By Challiss Silvay

For a Patrician:
He reared a purple pride upon
the fable of his blood;
now Death exultantly remarks
his woe in brotherhood.

For a Spinster:
Forgive, O winds, who ripens here,
cool dust her marriage bed,
if with a latent bloom she tempts
the lustful of the dead.

For a Reformer:
Unwanted by a weary God,
refused a home in hell,
he renders in protesting earth
a Puritanic smell.

THE YOUNG POET CONSIDERS

By Charles Ballard

The glare of day has dazzled me;
the sun has scorched my eyes almost to blindness:
I will walk abroad in the night and search for beauty,
groping in darkness to find it.

I will forget the myriad voices of the day—
I will know nothing.
I shall find the world new, like a child;
my fingers will touch all things lightly, like those of a blind man.

When I breathe the perfume of flowers I will move slowly,
lest I brush against tender petals and bruise them.
I shall find the cool surfaces of fruits,
apple and pear and plum.

I shall stroke the velvet faces of children,
and the floss of their hair.
I shall come upon the cold wonder of marble,
the warmth of polished wood.

I shall hear the thousand voices of the wind,
fluting at casements,
thrilling thin like oboes in the trees,
crying like brass on hilltops,
waking the deep-toned viols of the sea.

The glare of day has dazzled me:
I will walk abroad in the night, searching for beauty.

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Summer Number

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THE NEW PIRANDELLO IN "DIANA E LA TUDA"

AN INTERPRETATION

By Fredericka Blankner

Whatever critical charges against Luigi Pirandello or friendly fears for the continued vigor of his art may have arisen from the repetitions in "*Vestire gli ignudi,*" "*La vita che ti diedi,*" and "*Ciascuno a suo modo,*"—which, as Professor Luigi Tonelli of Parma remarks (1) "truly give the impression that the author *piétine sur place,*"—they are dispelled by his recent "*Diana e la Tuda.*"

"*Diana e la Tuda*" anew confirms him as a dramatist of the first rank. The play would be indeed sufficient to establish him as such had he written it alone. That the development of Pirandello should be thus still in progress is to be expected in view of the fact that he has been writing plays for only a decade, but certainly it is somewhat to be marvelled at when, on the other hand, one considers that the author is a man of sixty, and that before the twenty-odd plays which have established him intercontinentally he had already produced half a dozen novels, and volumes of short stories of such power that some of the critics still find in them his superior achievement. One is led to think of Voltaire, of Santayana, who in their earlier accomplishments, even though these alone were sufficient to rank them,—were merely warming up for their real work, done after sixty.

Were not Pirandello, being an artist, disregardful of what the critics may say in so far as its having any influence on the directives of his art, it might be believed that "*Diana e la Tuda*" were written in part to demonstrate just how different the Pirandello of today can seem from the Pirandello of the past, and to make clear that much of his previous theatre has been only by way of intermezzo in dramatic creation.

But, characteristically with this paradoxical artist, the new Pirandello essentially is the old Pirandello! Pirandello himself would be the first to insist that he has not changed. In "*Diana e la Tuda*" it is because of the very emphasis with which the dramatist reiterates the central theme of all his art that we have the sense of something novel! He adds nothing to what he has said before except a crystal clarity in his way of saying it.

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(1) In a study of the contemporary Italian theatre, "*Il teatro italiano di oggi,*" in *Italica,* Bulletin of the American Association of Teachers of Italian, February, 1927; translated in *The Drama,* March, 1927.

Indeed, since Pirandello sees the two forces that he calls "form" and "movement" as the only and inevitable controls of life, and regards their existence and conflict as a fixed law, he must needs repeat himself. But in "*Diana e la Tuda*", he proves that he can continue to repeat himself,—as life repeats itself,—and still be new,—just as life, though always regulated by the same laws, (whatever they be!) sometimes takes turns that seem to place us in another world.

I was privileged to read "*Diana e la Tuda*" in manuscript, and to discuss its intentions at length with the author.

The play is, in the words of the dramatist himself, the "tragic synthesis" of his central idea, "form" and "movement,"—hence his major work. Before "*Diana e la Tuda*," form and movement, though they premeated all of Pirandello's art, were only, one might say, in the atmosphere in which his characters had their being,—as the laws of life are in the atmosphere,—and either not sensed or sensed only vaguely. But here the form-movement conflict alone is the theme of the play. Pirandello has taken these forces down from the overtones to state them in the major melody; or, mindful of the formalism of the drama, it would be more appropriate to say in the *cantus firmus*. It is as though the artist had at last turned the tapestry of his art to reveal the design on the right side, which, simple though it is, has caused all of the unintelligibility on the wrong.

But just what are form and movement, these twin lenses through which Pirandello views the world?

This Italian conceives life to be always the antithesis of two necessities, which in their conflict result inevitably in tragedy,—movement, the flowing fire of life, and form, its ever-renewing inescapable prison that will not let it flow. Form is the binding chain which movement is eternally breaking. The ideal life, would be to renew the form every instant, that is, to unite movement with form,—in the words of one of the characters in "*Diana e la Tuda*:" "To maintain the soul continually as in a state of fusion, in order that it should not thicken, become rigid." But this ideal is impossible. Life is, as it were, a lava which through a mystic internal heat (movement) rhythmically resists congealment (form) for a time, but finally succumbs in death, either spiritual or physical.

Of course, Pirandello has often been accused of being too theoretic. Yet the fact that each of the main characters in "*Diana e la Tuda*" (only three in number for the conflict is reduced to its elements: Tuda, the model, and the sculptors Sirio and Giuncano) has a value in terms of form and movement should not detract from the human quality of the play, since every human being likewise has value in terms of form and movement. More subtly than his accusers and,—in part for that reason,—more truly, Pirandello has understood that the reality of life is not in the so-called "real" alone but in a combination of the "real" with the idea, or dream,—interactive, inextricably confused. Even in "*L'uomo, la bestia, e la virtu*," where the characters declaredly are unreal, Pirandello throughout has managed to give a painful illusion of reality. And in "*Diana e la Tuda*," the multiple and shifting human and philosophic values with which the work is almost electrically vibrant are blended, identified,—with true realism. The result is a play compelling in its more obvious aspects for the spectator who wants human interest,—it was its plot that was responsible for the popular success also of "*Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*,"—and at the same time more than satisfying for that rare yet not wholly mythic being who goes to the theatre to think.

Tuda, Sirio, Giuncano, are highly differentiated in temperament,—as contrasted indeed as are form and movement. Without, of course, realizing it in these terms themselves, Tuda, enamored of Sirio, is the movement, the emotion, the passion of life; Sirio, who is using Tuda as model for his statue of Diana, is the form. In Tuda the fire of life is flowing uncontrolled; in Sirio it is congealed to insensibility. Their relationship, inevitable according to Pirandello's theory of life, and their conflict, equally inevitable because of their antipodal natures, cause the tragedy,—which is, alas! inevitable also.

As in part were "*Ciascuno a suo modo*" and, in a greater degree, "*Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*," "*Diana e la Tuda*" also is a critique of the process of artistic creation, made principally through the old scupltor Giuncano.

Giuncano, instead of desiring only form like Sirio or only movement like Tuda, is aware of the existence of both of them and of the necessity of their union in art, if it is not to be a betrayal rather than an expression of the artist's idea. He observes with disapprobation that the sole concern of Sirio and of the other artists in the world is to seize the living idea and harden it so that it will no longer move. He grows to have a horror of the static, because it is untrue to life, of a statue that "no longer moves" for "time without age, the most fearful of things." (Asked by Sirio what he means by "time without age," Giuncano explains that "age is time when it becomes human, time when it suffers.") In the presence of a statue the old sculptor feels "the same dismay that is experienced" before the corpse "of one who but a bit ago was alive and now is there fixed, never to move again," never to alter, dead, "arrested in a living action."

But Giuncano realizes that the desired union of form and movement is impossible. And because he is truly an artist, transcending Sirio who is content with form alone, he renounces the creation of art as unworthy of art's inspiration, since as man knows it art is the creation, paradoxically, of dead things. He is resolved not to return to sculpture until he can give his statues movement as he gives them form; therefore he goes about wistfully seeking "a burning clay to pour within all statues." From the more materialistic Sirio, Giuncano's passion for an art that is alive elicits only mocking allusions to Pygmalion.

To all appearances Giuncano is apart from the affair of Sirio and Tuda, yet in reality he is intimately involved in it. For the disillusioned sculptor is secretly deeply in love with Tuda, despite the fact that she is young and he is old.

Giuncano is aware that he is old. He knows that his body is ageing because he feels its "stiffening." Human life as we know it, he describes as a slow dying ending in complete rigidity. The tragedy is that within this stagnating body the heart is unchanged,—a double reversable form-movement conflict. Giuncano's philosophy, perhaps largely because he is experiencing the grief that results from not obeying it, is: "To keep moving, never to stop, never to fix one's self in any sentiment."

Transparent through the human tragedy of his passion for Tuda is the allegorical significance of the artist being enamored of the movement that he can never have in his art. It is Sirio who, though loving Tuda not at all for herself, ironically has her love, just as he, though loving art so much less than Giuncano, has the art which Giuncano has renounced.

The action of the tragedy develops in Sirio's studio, the background appropriately striped with black and white,—absolute severity and symmetry, since it is, as Pirandello points out, "the kingdom of form."

There we see Sirio engaged in work on his statue of Diana, for which Tuda is posing. (Pirandello has chosen that this statue, which is as important in the drama as are the living characters, should resemble the Diana of Cellini in the Museum at Brescia, selected because a form "somewhat different and elegant.")

Sirio is wholly devoted to his statue; he desires one thing only in life: to finish it. As Giuncano has sacrificed art to life, Sirio sacrifices life to art, his own life and even the life of others. For he is freezing all of Tuda's life as well as his own into his Diana. While Tuda stands before him as model and he insists, "Hold still—still—*still*——" and his eyes drink her and transform her into the statue, her arm becomes cold as if dead, she grows faint, and feels that her life is leaving her. "*Fermare l'attimo*," "to arrest the instant" is to create death. Movement in so far as it enters form, dies,—for then it is movement no longer.

Sirio in order "to oblige Tuda to remain model for him exclusively" offers to marry her; signifying thus that he would deprive her of movement, of liberty, even in the hours when she is not posing.

Since she is desperately in love with him, Tuda consents, but the result of their marriage is disaster. For though movement is always from its very nature attracted by form, an attempt at their union means death for one of them and impotence for the other. Sirio will not submit to movement; Tuda will not submit to form: and between themselves they ruin each other.

Since it is impossible to make a statue live, day by day Sirio continues to make his model die. The dying through the years that Giuncano lamented is concentrated in Tuda: we see her die in weeks, days, minutes even. The inference is that when the statue will be finished, Tuda's life will be completely fled, absorbed in the marble. Tuda, feeling her personality being drawn from her and moulded into the statue (it begins to look out on the world even with Tuda's eyes!) complains bitterly to her confidant Giuncano: "To be there, there with my flesh overflowing with life, with my own eyes seeing what he was doing with me, that he was taking me, taking all of me for his statue; to be there, I—alive———! and to be nothing!!"

She would be again as she was, before she was wedded to form, but the past is irrevocable—and she is being changed by forces beyond her control. The sense of immutable law, of the blank wall of an impasse, is marvelously present in this drama, as at times of crisis it is in life.

Giuncano who observes what Sirio is doing to Tuda and resents it, both because it means the death of his beloved and of movement, explains Sirio's point of view to Tuda (he understands because it was once his own), and condemns it: "But the artist, my dear, believes that he has the right to profit by everything—— But not in my presence, mind! because life,—I vindicated it even at the expense of my art. For I don't admit the existence of that right—I don't admit it—and I deny it even more when it comes to the rights of others."

Although Pirandello's sympathies are with Giuncano,—in Giuncano he gives, indeed, in many respects a portrait of himself,—he allows Sirio to express his reasons for his attitude. Accused by Giuncano of not respecting the life of Tuda, Sirio defends himself: "And so, I don't respect her? You have the courage to say that I do not respect her, because I want her to serve for something that stands above and over that which we,—you, she, I myself,—can suffer?" (Which "something" is, of course, Art.) And Pirandello grants Sirio the justification of putting all of his life and the life of others into the statue in order that that life will never die. Sirio does not hesitate at the price—if the result is beautiful, that is sufficient. But Giuncano answers him,—making one of Pirandello's beloved paradoxes: "And in the meantime it dies forever!"

But as Sirio's crime is his inhumanity, Tuda's crime is her undisciplined sentiment. Life for her consists in freely following every inner impulse: she is capricious,—she will be even violent. She is not content to be merely what Sirio wants her for, his model, and she rebels.

In revenge for Sirio's coldness Tuda would betray him. She cannot betray him as wife, so she betrays him as model, and poses for a rival artist.

But there is more than a merely human revenge. The tragedy is to be triple: human, artistic, and conceptual or philosophic. In the statue, form had conquered movement; now movement in retaliation would show itself more powerful and conquer form. When Sirio created the statue and put into it

Tuda's life, this life ceased to be life by contact with form. Now Tuda would bring about a reversal. She, movement, would herself enter the statue. Which makes the climax.

"Yes, yes," she cries to Sirio, "let me die in it, if you do not want me to live!" And then to Giuncano: "You have been seeking a burning clay to pour within your statues? Here it is! Behold it. It is I!" Madly she rushes toward the three steps of the platform on which the statue stands. "I want to be in it, I—there within it! I burn! I burn!"

But Sirio, knowing that if Tuda (movement) should enter his statue (form) directly, his Diana would be shattered, and caring in life only for the statue, would rather murder Tuda than let her ruin it. He springs after her and reaches her on the top step. "Dare to touch it, and I kill you."

And then the tragic situation is resolved by precipitation in more hopeless tragedy still. Giuncano with Tuda threatened becomes like a wild beast and leaps upon Sirio: "And whom are you going to kill? Woe to you if you touch her!———No!!! —— It is I instead who will kill you!" He falls with Sirio to the ground. Tuda now insanely screams to Giuncano to release Sirio, but Giuncano strangles him until he is dead. (It is the vital creator and not the dehumanized creator, the incomplete artist, who conquers.)

When Giuncano becomes aware of what he has done, he mutters "*Blindness—blindness.*" It is the blindness of passion unguided by reason, source of most of the tragedies of mankind. Pirandello is an enemy of reason, when reason acts alone,—and if he must choose between reason and sentiment he is more the enemy of reason, for, as he says, "sentiment is inborn, but reason is constructed." But it is fatal to abandon one's self wholly to sentiment, just as it is fatal to abandon one's self wholly to the intellect or to the will.

Tuda bends over Sirio to whom she was so passionately and hopelessly devoted, and touches his forehead. She finds him cold. "O God," she mumbles, "killed because of me, who am to blame for all of it! . . . . because I did not know how to be that for which he wanted me, that statue there."

Giuncano continues to mutter, "Blindness———blindness"—the blindness of Tuda as well as his own.

But Tuda, whose tragedy before when she was being converted into the statue was that she was "nothing," now that all is changed must still suffer the same frustration. "I," she moans just before the falling of the curtain, "I who as it is now am: nothing . . always nothing." "*Nulla*" is the recurrent word; when movement was made to enter form, it became nothing now isolated from form it still is nothing. The tragedy of human life according to Pirandello, since form and movement though both essential are irreconcilable, is a tragedy of inevitable negation.

The fault is Tuda's then? Tuda claims that it is hers, that she was to blame for all of it from the very fact of being alive,—but is it hers? Pirandello's answer in the play is, as one would expect with him, a question: "Who knows whose fault it is? No one does any wrong—and all do harm."

At the end only the statue remains unmoved, serene, untouched by human blindness and human weakness, and the resultant human wreckage in tragedy at its feet.

Then it is the statue that has won in this conflict between life and statue? But the statue is unfinished, form without the movement that has been feeding it, and will ever remain so; and Tuda, though she, too, remains and her dying has been arrested is likewise thwarted, movement without form, and can never be happy. Both have won and neither has won as was necessary.

And form and movement are just as much in conflict at the end as at the beginning! There is no solution.

Pirandello believes that "*Diana e la Tuda*," his key-drama, is his masterpiece. Of his earlier plays he considers the most important to be "*Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*" (of which he remarks, "Yes, perhaps there I have said all that I have to say"—) "*Enrico IV*" and "*Cosi e* (*se vi pare*)". But in "*Diana e la Tuda*," supreme statement of his concept of life, classical in its simplicity, he feels that he surpasses them.

Artists are, of course, notoriously poor judges of their own works. But Italians, precisely because they are so full of the vital movement that Giuncano craved, are nothing if not surprising. A reading of the play convinces one that the critics must agree with Pirandello.

NOTE

The English translations of the titles of the plays mentioned are as follows:

"*Vestie gli ignudi*"	"Clothing the naked"
"*La vita che ti diedi*"	"The life I gave thee"
"*Ciascuno a suo modo*"	"Each in his own way"
"*Diana e la Tuda*"	"Diana and Tuda"
"*L'uomo, la bestia, e la virtu*"	"The Man, the Beast, and Virtue"
"*Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*"	"Six characters in search of an author"
"*Cosi e* (*se vi pare*)"	"So it is (if you think so)"
"*Enrico IV*"	"Henry IV"

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T TALK

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By August von Kotzebue

Translated from the German by Beatrice B. Beebe

Cast of Characters

Mr. Bloch
Mrs. Bloch, *his wife*
Edward, *their son*
Julia, *their adopted daughter*
Schlau, *Edward's servant*
Dr. Puffler

Scene: *Room in* Bloch's *house.* Mr. and Mrs. Bloch *are on the stage when the curtain rises.*

Mrs. Bloch—Eight days, my husband, eight whole days.

Mr. Bloch.—I know.

Mrs. Bloch.—He has not spoken a word in that time.

Mr. Bloch.—Not a syllable.

Mrs. Bloch.—It is most unfortunate!

Mr. Bloch.—Most stubborn, you should say.

Mrs. Bloch.—Stubborn? Heaven preserve us! No, I tell you it is an illness, a terrible ailment—the result of a deep sorrow, for which your sternness is totally to blame.

Mr. Bloch.—And I say to you it is stubbornness, terrible stubbornness, the result of a deep corruption, for which your pampering is wholly to blame.

Mrs. Bloch.—O the dear boy! He usually talks too much rather than too little.

Mr. Bloch.—Yes, God knows he does. He can chatter (*aside*) as much as his mother.

Mrs. Bloch.—He always speaks his mind freely.

Mr. Bloch.—He talks foolishness continually.

Mrs. Bloch.—When have you heard him say anything stupid, my wise husband?

Mr. Bloch.—I allude merely to the idea that he wants to marry our adopted daughter.

Mrs. Bloch.—I see nothing foolish about that. Julia is a lovely, merry girl.

Mr. Bloch.—Oh, yes, lovely and merry. In those two words lie her dowry, her endowment, her heritage.

Mrs. Bloch.—Our son is rich enough.

Mr. Bloch.—In frivolity.

Mrs. Bloch.—He has head and heart.

Mr. Bloch.—Both reversed.

Mrs. Bloch.—He is beloved by the whole city.

Mr. Bloch.—Because the whole city likes to listen to a gossip.

Mrs. Bloch.—Then you can be happy. He will gossip no more, for he is dumb. I wish you joy with your dumb son.

Mr. Bloch.—It is of no consequence.

Mrs. Bloch.—Your cursed indifference toward such a terrible misfortune will drive me to despair. There he stands, the Honorable Mr. Bloch, as if he had been informed that his son had a slight toothache. I tell you he is dumb, dumb, DUMB!

Mr. Bloch.—Now then, do you want to make me deaf?

Mrs. Bloch.—Your heart has been deaf for a long time. You alone are responsible for this grief. Why do you disapprove of his love? Why do you forbid him to think of Julia? That has shattered his whole nervous system, a stroke of apoplexy has affected his tongue. Neither my tenderness nor the requests of his friends can force from him a single syllable. Would to heavens he was dumb for you alone, that would serve you right, for how often have you ordered him to be quiet when the poor lad asked for money for his small expenses.

Mr. Bloch.—The poor lad? Small expenses? Fine. He would have reduced us to beggars long ago if I had not curbed his extravagances.

Mrs. Bloch.—Oh, how gladly would I beg if I could only get his lost speech by begging. I am an unfortunate mother!

Mr. Bloch.—Oh, there, stop whining. If you really believe that he is dumb, then summon the whole medical profession, have him cupped, cut, electrified, galvanized to your heart's content.

Mrs. Bloch.—Yes, I will do just that. I will send on the spot for Dr. Puffler, our most celebrated physician. He will help him, even if it takes our whole fortune.

Mr. Bloch.—Dr. Puffler will not help him. But I will make a test myself.

Mrs. Bloch.—You? A test?

Mr. Bloch.—I dare say he will need some money again, for his purse is always empty. Perhaps, in order to break his stubbornness and to satisfy you, I shall not stick at twenty gold pieces.

Mrs. Bloch.—Ah, if such a simple matter were reasonable . . .

Mr. Bloch.—Twenty pieces of gold? That is no simple matter!

Mrs. Bloch.—If money could save him I would sell my wedding ring and your picture. (*Exit.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Very flattering! But very usual. An only son is always dearer to the mother than her only husband. I set a good face on a bad game, yet I am almost alarmed myself. Were it merely perversity, I would be glad of the pause, for, heavens, how much foolishness can't a young fellow do in eight days. But a gossip who is silent for eight days of his own accord . . . that seems to be an impossibility. But if the golden key will not open his mouth again, ah, then I will finally have to believe that a stroke has really crippled his tongue. (*Enter* EDWARD.) Well, my dear son, how are you? Can't you open your mouth yet?

(EDWARD *shrugs shoulders in silence.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Are you perhaps afraid that you will say something stupid?

(EDWARD *shakes his head.*)

Mr. Bloch.—I thought probably not. One rarely fears that in his maturity. Therefore, you only wish to grieve your parents?

(EDWARD *siezes his hand and with childish ardor presses it to his heart.*)

Mr. Bloch.—The pantomime does not displease me, but I would prefer that you spoke your love for your parents in words.

(EDWARD *makes a sign that he cannot do so.*)

Mr. Bloch.—You cannot? Are you bewitched?

(EDWARD *shakes his head.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Or under a spell?

(EDWARD *nods.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Do you feel pain anywhere?

(EDWARD *sighs and lays his hand on his heart.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Well, I will try to break the spell. I know you think that I am stingy because I do not always gratify your extravagant fancies. To-day a liberal whim makes me change to your advantage. See this purse. It is heavy. Do you want it?

(EDWARD *nods.*)

Mr. Bloch.—It is yours, but be grateful.

(EDWARD *nods that he will.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Then take it and speak.

(EDWARD *takes it and kisses his father's hand.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Just three words: "I thank you."

(EDWARD *does so by signs, then runs away with the purse.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Hey there, rascal, I had not counted on that! Damned scoundrel!

(*Enter* SCHLAU.)

SCHLAU.—Did the gentleman call?

Mr. Bloch.—You're right. I see that you are acquainted with your name. Did you meet my son?

Schlau.—Oh yes, he ran, he jumped, he seemed as happy as if he had just found a treasure.

Mr. Bloch.—I gave him twenty gold pieces to get him to speak.

Schlau.—Speak? What?

Mr. Bloch.—Just anything so long as his cursed silence does not worry us any more.

Schlau.—So? Can one earn money from you that way?

Mr. Bloch.—What do you think the cause is?

(SCHLAU *shrugs his shoulders and is silent.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Do you believe he has really become dumb?

(SCHLAU *pantomimes as before.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Or is it merely stubbornness?

(SCHLAU *nods.*)

Mr. Bloch.—For what reason?

(SCHLAU *puts his finger on his lips.*)

Mr. Bloch.—You will not say?

(SCHLAU *shakes head.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Shall I open your mouth?

(SCHLAU *nods vigorously.*)

Mr. Bloch.—I will be glad to do so. (*Reaches for his cane.*)

Schlau.—Oh, I humbly beg of you, don't trouble yourself. My tongue is already loose again.

Mr. Bloch.—I will teach you to make fun of my son.

Schlau.—Good Lord, I have talked so much and have received no pay for it. Now I suddenly hear that your purse is opened for dumb people. I am a poor devil, what shall I do? I shall become dumb.

Mr. Bloch.—My purse will be open to you if you can bring my son to break his silence.

Schlau.—There's nothing in the world any easier. Leave it to me. Before a quarter of an hour has passed I will bring you a dozen "Rascals" and "Knaves" which according to his commendable habit, he has collectively lavished on me.

Mr. Bloch.—For every title of honor I will reward you with a goldpiece.

Schlau.—Fine! Then I will be rich very soon!

Mr. Bloch.—Try it a bit and let me know the result. (*Exit.*)

Schlau.—Titles usually profit nothing, although they are paid for dearly enough many times. But one slanders this good world if one reproaches it for regarding only the titles. For example, there is Mr. Bloch—simply Mr. Bloch, and not at all gracious. But distinguished people do not care at all for that. His wine is old, his table nice, his gold important, his adopted daughter beautiful, and, though I do say it, his valet a nimble cup-bearer. So the house is never empty. (EDWARD *enters.*) Aha! the young gentleman. Now for the fortune hunt. According to the Golden Rule, I wish you happiness, but your generous father deserves a few friendly words, doesn't he? Do you know, also, that for twenty gold pieces one can have a whole bandit romance copied in four volumes, and a whole dozen sonnets to boot?

(EDWARD, *lost in thought and without paying any attention to* SCHLAU, *makes a motion to signify that it pains him not to be able to speak. Then he decides that he wishes to write and indicates it to the servant by the usual signs*).

Schlau.—Aha, I understand. (*Gets a coat from the next room and brushes it.*) (EDWARD *asks impatiently what he does that for.*)

Schlau.—Well, didn't you order me to brush your coat? (*He repeats* EDWARD'S *pantomime, yet without bringing his fingers together.*)

(EDWARD *shows him that he is a dunce, draws a piece of paper out of table drawer and makes the idea of writing plainer.*)

Schlau.—Aha, you want to write?

(EDWARD *nods.*)

Schlau.—But what will you write with? with ink? with pencil? with crayon? on paper? on parchment? on a slate? Do you know that at the large library . . . where is it now? . . . they show dry palm leaves scrawled with needles, adorable little love letters, for they are folded up just like a fan? Yes, if you want to write on such palm leaves, I cannot provide them for you.

(EDWARD *scornfully threatens him.*)

Schlau.—No, really, I don't know of anywhere to get them. No palms grow around here. We have been looking for a long time for the palm of peace, but it is nowhere to be found.

(EDWARD *shakes him by the shoulder and points to the paper.*)

Schlau.—Ah, you wish paper, blank paper?

(EDWARD *nods.*)

Schlau.—And doubtless sand, too?

(EDWARD *shakes his head.*)

Schlau.—There you are wrong. It would be very aristocratic when one received a letter from another to have a half pound of glistening sand roll out of it.

(EDWARD *threatens him again and shoves him away.*)

Schlau.—I'll go at once. Paper, pen, ink . . . . (*Comes back*) but how about sealing wax?

(EDWARD *nods.*)

Schlau.—If there still is any. Yesterday I broke your mouth glass with the J. cut in it. I put it together with the last small piece of sealing wax.

(EDWARD *shakes his fist at him.*)

Schlau.—I'll go at once. (*Again turns around.*) But what kind of paper do you really want? ordinary Hollandish? or smooth English with devices on the border?

(EDWARD *makes a sign that it is of no consequence.*)

Schlau.—Oh, I humbly beg your pardon, it is of much consequence. A challenge? Then we take pro patria. A love letter? Then we take vellum. Smooth words, smooth paper. Or some sort of bill of exchange? Then it must be stamped.

(EDWARD *stamps his foot and threatens to hit* SCHLAU.)

Schlau.—Yes, yes, I am going at once. (*To himself.*) It is devilish hard to coax a "Scoundrel" out of him. (*Exit.*)

(EDWARD *draws forth from his pocket* JULIA'S *picture, looks at it as if enchanted, and vows to himself that he will maintain silence.* SCHLAU *enters bringing writing materials and a lighted lamp.* EDWARD *sits down and writes.*)

Schlau (*Without paying any attention*).—I must tell you, worthy sir . . . .

(Edward *motions him to be quiet.*)

Schlau (*Paying no attention*).—A mighty fortunate little thing that happened to me last evening.

(Edward *again in anger motions for silence*).

Schlau.—I am to be quiet? Begging your pardon, that is not so easy for me as it is for you. For you see: first I am no second. And even if I were a second, I would dare say at least, memento mori. Second, I am no judge, and even if I were a judge I would dare say at least, fiat justitia. Third, I am not dumb, and even if I were dumb I would dare cry aloud at least a few terrible tones. Now just consider if the whole house took the notion to be quiet as mice, as you are, it would provide splendid entertainment. No, thank God, I can still talk, and I don't intend to loose the ability with you. By speech, whether wise or not, man is distinguished from the animals. A fool can talk, but the wisest elephant must remain silent.

(Edward *continues to write, without paying any attention to* Schlau's *chatter.*)

Schlau (*Aside*).—All in vain. I have almost exhausted my arts. There remains for me only one other means. If that fails, too . . . usually I am commissioned to seal his letters. It is to be hoped that he will take it easy today, too.

(Edward *folds the letter and gives a sign for* Schlau *to seal it.*

Schlau.—Certainly, certainly, worthy sir. (*Seals it, and then holds it too near the lamp and it catches fire.*)

(Edward, *in great anger, siezes a cane, beats* Schlau *soundly, and then exits.*)

Schlau.—Oh my, oh my, that is a devilish sort of eloquence. I longed only for rain, but not for thunder and lightning. And if the pig-headed fellow had only added a few of his usual compliments. Ordinarily he has on hand a whole lexicon of them in many languages. But today not even the tiniest "rascal."

(*Enter* Mr. Bloch.)

Mr. Bloch.—Well, have you succeeded?

Schlau.—Partly.

Mr. Bloch.—Has he spoken?

Schlau.—Not with his mouth, but with his hands. (*Pantomime of beating.*) All in vain have I talked my lungs as empty as a beggar's sack. Dumb as a fish, he finally took his cane and thrashed me into silence.

Mr. Bloch.—Do you think he is really dumb?

Schlau.—I tell you he is as dumb as my mother after she was dead. The Great Sultan can take him to his palace today.

Mr. Bloch.—Could a sort of apoplexy . . .

Schlau.—Whatever has befallen the poor fellow that he is not talkative, he is entirely limber.

Mr. Bloch.—What a pity that would be! I have only one son. I hoped he would rejuvenate me with grandchildren . . . but a mute . . . what girl would love him!

Schlau.—Oh, don't allow yourself to be too anxious about that. Real talkativeness is hidden in your purse. Even if he were totally blind the girls would flock about him. A rich heir . . . he can get by with three or four senses lacking.

(*A knock at the door is heard.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Who is knocking? Come in.

(*Enter* Dr. Puffler.)

Dr. Puffler.—My most esteemed Mr. Bloch, I have been summoned here to undertake the case of a very difficult patient.

Mr. Bloch.—Yes, Doctor, my son, my only son! He has become dumb.

Dr. Puffler.—Dumb indeed!

Mr. Bloch.—We can't get a word out of him.

Dr. Puffler.—Not a word, indeed!

Mr. Bloch.—He eats, drinks, sleeps just as usual.

Dr. Puffler.—As usual, indeed!

Mr. Bloch.—What do you make of it, Doctor?

Dr. Puffler.—What do I make of it? Indeed!

Schlau (*Aside*).—I could almost believe that I am a doctor, too. I could have said, "indeed, indeed," long ago.

Mr. Bloch.—Will you not have the goodness to explain yourself more clearly?

Dr. Puffler (*After a long pause and with a very important air*).—Do you know, sir, what in particular has brought about this condition?

Mr. Bloch.—I certainly wish that I could explain it.

Dr. Puffler.—Then I must determine where the disease lies.

Schlau (*Aside*).—Yes, the thousand diseases.

Dr. Puffler.—And now, what do you think, where shall I search for the seat of the malady?

Mr. Bloch.—Well? Tell me at once.

Dr. Puffler.—In the tongue itself.

Mr. Bloch.—Really?

Schlau.—That is remarkable.

Dr. Puffler.—Please do not interrupt me. The tongue, sir, you probably believe it to be a mere mass of flesh? Not at all, sir. You are to know that it has many nerves . . .

Mr. Bloch.—Alas, I do know it. My wife has spasms every day.

Dr. Puffler.—Then I wish you happiness. For people who have spasms are of more tender organization, are more sympathetic, more sensitive, etc.

Mr. Bloch.—But to come back to the subject of eth tongue . . .

Dr. Puffler.—Yes, the tongue, sir, receives most of the nerves of the forehead, and indeed from nine pair of nerves, although the eighth forwards to it just a few twigs and branches.

Mr. Bloch.—Very well, Doctor, but that still does not bring us to the point.

Dr. Puffler.—It certainly does, for these nerves lead straight to the tongue, and that is our point.

Mr. Bloch.—Then let us stick to it.

Dr. Puffler.—We have been sticking to it. The tongue, sir, . . . its shape is undoubtedly well known to you?

Mr. Bloch.—Oh, yes, yes.

Dr. Puffler.—It rests on a broad rear section formed of so-called tongue bones, which is shaped almost like a horse-shoe . . .

Schlau (*Aside*).—Now we're starting to gallop!

Mr. Bloch.—I don't desire any anatomical demonstration.

Dr. Puffler.—Patience, sir. Bridle your own tongue a little more. Below the fore pointed part you will find the ligament of the tongue, which, whenever it grows somewhat fast, must be cut.

Mr. Bloch.—But that is not the case with my son. As long as he has lived he has demonstrated that his tongue ligaments have not interferred with his speech.

Schlau.—I can testify to that.

Dr. Puffler.—So we must seek for the disease in the nerves, and, indeed, in the nine pair.

Mr. Bloch.—Could a nervous apoplexy . . .

Dr. Puffler.—That's it, sir, apoplexy. (*While he utters this word with the greatest effect, he accidently taps with his forefinger on the head of* SCHLAU, *who is standing beside him and who almost sinks to the floor from fear.*) Now you know all.

Mr. Bloch.—But the cause of such a fearful malady? My wife maintains that a deep sorrow . . . could such a thing be possible?

Dr. Puffler.—And why not? Moments of great emotion usually are quiet.

Mr. Bloch.—Yes, for a minute, but not for a whole week.

Dr. Puffler.—Who can say of a surety concerning a passion just how long it will be dumb?

Mr. Bloch.—Well, granted that it is so, is there, then, no means of curing him?

Dr. Puffler.—Means? Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Means? I stand here before you and you doubt?

Mr. Bloch.—Then hurry.

Dr. Puffler.—Yes, my dear sir, I will hurry. I hope to have him entirely cured in two or three years.

Mr. Bloch.—Will it take so long?

Dr. Puffler.—Do not lose courage, even if it should require much longer.

Mr. Bloch.—I am an old man. I shall not live to see it.

Dr. Puffler.—If only your son will live to see it. And that we will hope for. Have the patient come here.

Mr. Bloch.—Go, call my son.

(SCHLAU *exits.*)

Dr. Puffler.—It would seem, sir, that you have little faith in our noble art.

Mr. Bloch.—Just because it is an art. Not all who learn this art become artists.

Dr. Puffler.—Granted. Not every physician attains a certain acuteness, perception, penetration, at just the right moment. But the art, sir, is a holy one in spite of that.

Mr. Bloch.—At least, it opens the gates of heaven to us.

Dr. Puffler.—I believe you are joking. Be careful, sir. The times are past when a certain Moliere dared to make the doctor an amusing figure in his theatre. Yet he would have died himself in that same theatre had not a physician prescribed for him a dram of rhubarb.

Mr. Bloch.—Here comes my son.

(*Enter* EDWARD *and* SCHLAU.)

Dr. Puffler.—Ah, come nearer, young man. Right, right, he is dumb. One can see that at once by his eyes.

Mr. Bloch.—By his eyes . . .

Dr. Puffler.—Yes, certainly. The parts of the machine that we call the body fit into one another everywhere, so that a single isordered function immediately shows itself on all the others.

Schlau.—Formerly my poor young master relied much on the speech of the eyes.

Dr. Puffler.—That is all over. His eyes are just as speechless as his mouth.

Mr. Bloch.—My, son, this famous man has come to cure you.

(EDWARD *signifies that he will not be successful.*)

Dr. Puffler.—The young gentleman appears to be a bit incredulous?

(EDWARD *nods.*)

Dr. Puffler.—Well, well, he shall soon say otherwise.

Mr. Bloch.—Oh, if he could only talk as we do!

Dr. Puffler.—Your pulse. Aha, just as I thought, a dumb pulse.

Mr. Bloch.—How is that, Doctor? You could even discover it in his pulse?

Dr. Puffler.—Everything, everything. I learned the feeling of the pulse from the Chinese, who practice this art the best. Now we will also inspect the tongue.

(EDWARD *refuses.*)

Dr. Puffler.—I tell you, your tongue. Stick it out.

Mr. Bloch.—I beg of you, Son.

(EDWARD *will not do so.*)

Dr. Puffler.—Well, if you will not show us your tongue, then at least tell us why.

Schlau.—If he could say that, he would not be dumb any longer, would he?

Dr. Puffler.—You are right, my son. Your power of observation does you credit. He seems to be a wise fellow.

Schlau.—Oh, entirely too good.

Dr. Puffler.—Well, young man, to business. I have no time to waste on childishness. There are a number of people at the point of death who cannot die without me. Out with your tongue!

(EDWARD *laughs and shows the doctor his tongue.*)

Dr. Puffler (*Regards it with his glasses on his nose.*)—Yes, yes, an ignorant man would swear that this was a lovely, fresh tongue. But I . . . I see the inflammation, the swelling, see all. Fortunately, I have my lances with me, and with just one professional cut . . .

(EDWARD *runs off the stage.*)

Dr. Puffler (*Running after him with the lance.*)—Hey, there, young man! Only a couple of ounces of blood!

Schlau.—He will not part with a drop.

Dr. Puffler.—Mr. Bloch, your son is a rebel. The stroke of apoplexy has not only hit his tongue but has also affected his mind. I tell you, your son is a fool, a dumb fool.

Schlau (*Aside*).—Would to heaven one could say that of all fools.

Dr. Puffler.—You will have to catch him, bind him, gag him, and when he is well bound, well gagged, then summon me again, and you shall see a miracle. (*Exit.*)

Schlau.—What a man! He would then be in a position to untie the tongue even of a dead man.

Mr. Bloch.—Well, that failed. Where are we to seek advice and help now?

(*Enter* MRS. BLOCH.)

Mrs. Bloch (*Who has heard the last words*).—Where, Sir? From Julia. Nowhere else.

Schlau.—Oh, yes, I'll wager he won't run away from that doctor.

Mrs. Bloch.—Forget for once the sound of your money bags. Consider Julia's attractions, her modesty, her obedience, her tenderness. Where could you find anywhere a better daughter-in-law?

Mr. Bloch.—Well, yes, yes, I'll admit that. But even Julia would hesitate about marrying a mute.

Mrs. Bloch.—I have spoken to her. My tears moved her. She is determined to extend a helping hand to the unfortunate boy.

Mr. Bloch.—In spite of the apoplexy? I call that the act of a fine woman.

Mrs. Bloch.—And what do you think! When Edward hears that she is going to bestow on him such a sacred happiness, may that not bring about such a change that his tongue will be loosed?

Mr. Bloch.—Perhaps. You are right . . . At any rate, I will try it. Schlau, go and tell him to come here. Say to him that we do not want him for Dr. Puffler, but for something far different. But do not tell him my object in calling for him.

(*Exit* SCHLAU.)

Mrs. Bloch.—Julia is in the next room. I'll hurry and prepare her. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Bloch.—Still, I fear the future. Yes, if she were the mute, then the marriage would be all right; but he!

(*Enter* EDWARD *and* SCHLAU.)

Mr. Bloch.—Come here, my son. I have some happy news for you.

(EDWARD *shrugs his shoulders.*)

Mr. Bloch.—It is about Julia.

(EDWARD *becomes visibly moved.*)

Mr. Bloch.—I have tested her and have learned that she is worthy of your love and mine.

(EDWARD *in ecstacy kisses his father's hand.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Speak but one word and she is yours.

(EDWARD *goes through violent notions and many times is about to speak.* SCHLAU *makes all sorts of comic attempts to aid him; slaps him on the back, fans him, etc. Finally,* EDWARD *motions him to be quiet and by a sign shows his father that he cannot speak.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Well, all hope is lost then, for you certainly know that such a girl would not marry a mute.

(EDWARD *throws himself in grief at his father's feet.*)

Mr. Bloch.—Poor boy, I pity you.

(*Enter* MRS. BLOCH *and* JULIA.)

Mr. Bloch.—Come nearer. It is of no use, his disease cannot be healed; for even the proposal to allow him to marry Julia has not brought a single word from him.

Mrs. Bloch.—Be comforted, unfortunate boy, the noble Julia is still willing to become yours.

Mr. Bloch.—Will you, dear girl?

Julia.—I am almost dumb . . . .

Schlau.—Well, then, we would have a dumb pair.

Julia.—I am ashamed to receive my happiness, and I hasten to dry your tears. Edward, I am satisfied with your obedience. Now you may speak.

Edward (*With great readiness*).—O my father! O my mother! O my adorable Julia! Where am I? Am I awake or do I dream? Is this no delusion? Do I possess your heart and hand and my parents' blessing? Where can I find words to express my feelings!

Schlau—A miracle! A miracle!

Mrs. Bloch.—What a sweet surprise!

Mr. Bloch (*Shaking his finger at* JULIA).—We have been deceived.

Julia.—No, my dear father. I truly did not forsee what has happened. I did not flatter myself with any hope. I only wanted to test his love, to subdue his loquacity, when I made him take a vow not to speak till I should give him permission.

Mr. Bloch.—That may all be.

Edward.—O my Julia! May I now say one sentence of only three words? I love you. I will repeat it every day, and only my happiness when in your arms will make me dumb.

CURTAIN

A CELTIC TREASURE HOUSE

By Amanda M. Ellis

When one reads the statement of a critic of note that there is today being created a Celtic Mythology of beauty, he can not refrain from saying that there is an old or ancient, Celtic Mythology; that some of its stories are at least two thousand years old; and that the early manuscripts of these Celtic tales are as old as those of Beowulf, our Anglo-Saxon epic. Furthermore, almost no old or even modern literature can surpass the sheer lyric beauty of some of its stories, the sweep and grandeur of others; or the exquisite wording, the naivete, or intense human quality of the whole. Here are strange accounts of the deeds of heroes, of the charm of women; of gruesome battles and head-hunting, of tenderness in love; of the help or injury of the gods; of hospitality of hate, of love of the beautiful. A strange mixture indeed! But the Celt, temperamental and passionate as he was, seems to have known only the extremes of emotion and action. These stories, unfortunately little known, have been collected and translated by several writers, among the best being Lady Augusta Gregory and Eleanor Hull.

Quoted material is from these translations. Miss Hull and Lady Gregory have done excellent and scholarly work.

There are, in all, three cycles of this early Irish literature. First is the Mythological cycle, a veritable Celtic *Genesis*, where one learns of the origin of the early Irish, their geneology, and of the home of their gods. This is the one cycle, at all dull, dull as any work of similar type would be. One can not soon forget, however, the location of their heaven, a place corresponding to the Indian's happy hunting ground, or to the Greek's Elysian fields. One need not go far to find it: it is beneath the green mounds of Ireland. Here live the Tuaha de Danannan, the gods, who are molded strangely after the shape and nature of man. In fact, at one time, there were men, but when they were defeated in battle they chose the most beautiful of the hills and valleys of Ireland to settle in, and they "put hidden walls about them, that no man could see through, but they themselves could see through them and pass through them," and in that country, there is "Neither age nor withering away, nor heaviness, nor sadness, nor jealousy nor envy, nor pride." In a later cycle the sidhe is described as having "a western door where the sun goes down," near where was "a stud of horses with grey speckled manes and other of red-brown. And at the eastern door were three tall trees of pure crimson, with lasting flowers, and birds singing from them for the young men of the king's rath. And there was a tree at the door of the court that there was not the like of for beauty, a silver tree, and when the sun was shining on it, it was like gold. And there were three times twenty other trees there, and the top of everyone meeting the other, and three hundred could be fed from every tree with fruit that is different, that is always ripe. And there was a fountain in the great court, and three times fifty striped cloaks, and a shining gold pin in the ear of every cloak. And there was a vat of merry mead for dividing among the household; it is a lasting custom that it is always full, ever and always." In this heaven, in some ways not unlike that of the Hebrews, one *is* surprised to find an extremely earth-y touch in that the gods feast, not on nectar and honey, but of ale and even of swine that "though they were killed and eaten one day, would be alive and fit for eating again the next day and would go on in that way forever."

The second great cycle, the Cuchulain cycle, dating about a hundred years later, deals with the exploits, love affairs, and death of the great hero Cuchulain. Born of a virgin and a god, he was destined to do great things. In that time men were *men* early; hence, when he was but six, Cuchulain excelled in deeds of valor. The day he took arms, Cathbad, the Druid, had said, "there will be fame on you and a great name, but your life time will not be long." From the time of his first combat when he hurled his iron ball through the forehead and out at the back "of an enemy's head so that his brains came along with it and the air could pass through the hole it made," Cuchulain never hesitated in battle. Those were the days of head hunting. Hence, many a time he returns and it is many heads he has attached to his chariot, and the battle rage still upon him. But when he meets the women or his wife, there is shame on him and the wildness goes from him. Yet, once, he feels the need to fight, it is great destruction that he does, so that when he attack his enemies "their heads, and their hands, and their feet, and their bones, were scattered through the plains of Muirthenene, like the sands on the shore, like the stars in the sky, like the dew in

May, like snow-flakes and hailstones, like leaves of the trees, like buttercups in a meadow, like grass under the feet of cattle on a fine summer day. It is red the plain was with the slaughter Cuchulain made when he came crashing over it." Usually, however, he engages in a struggle against one man in hand to hand combats, for rarely do whole armies meet. It is surprising that in these individual encounters the men fight with the greatest of ferocity only to be chivalrous to each other when nightfall comes and they cease.

Most pathetic is the fight of Cuchulain with his friend Ferdidad, allied with the opposing hosts. Tricked into meeting, they fight uutil Ferdidad is killed. "And then," says the poet, "over Cuchulain came a weakness and fainting when he saw Ferdidad lying dying at his feet, and he heeded not the warnings of his charioteer telling him that the men of Erin were gathering across the ford to do battle with him and to avenge the death of their champion. For Cuchulain said, 'What availed me to arise now that my friend is fallen by my hand?' And tears such as strong warriors weep poured from his eyes."

But this great hero is something more than a fighter. When he was a young man, "all the women of Ulster loved him for his skill in feats, for the lightness of his leap, for the weight of his wisdom, for the sweetness of his speech, for the beauty of his face, for the loveliness of his looks, for all his gifts. He had the gift of caution in fighting, until such time as his anger would come on him, and the hero light would shine about his head; the gift of feats; the gift of chess-playing, the gift of draught-playing; the gift of counting, the gift of divining; the gift of right judgment, the gift of beauty." These qualities, plus his divine origin make him deeply loved by women and respected by men. Nor does Cuchulain resent having half the women of Ulster "blind today with looking at you, from the greatness of their love for you," as one man declares. Rather, he enjoys amusing them with his feats; and though he loves his wife is not above falling in love with other women. It was this very fact that caused his death. In those great days, it was possible for a man to go to the country of the sidhe, mingle with the gods, and then return to earth. On one such trip, Cuchulain conquered a woman warrior, Aoife, and then left her, telling her to send her son to him in Ulster. Now when Aoife heard of Cuchulain's marriage to Emer, it is angry she was, and great jealousy came on her, and her love for Cuchulain was turned to hatred. And it was a promise exacted from her son, that he should go to Ulster, that it was no fight he should refuse, that it was his name should be given to no one. Fate is it who brings father and son into mortal combat; and fate it is that allows Cuchulain to kill his own son. Then great is his horror and grief at what he had done, though before he had thought little of his son. Strangely, he has no consciousness of the fact that he is in any way responsible for the tragedy; rather he feels anger toward Aoife: "'If I had the head of the woman that sent her son to his death, I would split it as I split this stone.' And he made four quarters of the stone." From this time, it is little desire he has to live and when finally fate forces him into his last great battle, it is not reluctant he is to go. When he is wounded, he determines that not lying down he will die; and to a great stone post, he binds himself. Then one of the men cuts off Cuchulain's head; and "the light faded away from about Cuchulain's head, and left it pale as the snow of a single night." But the men of Ulster recover the head and body of the hero, and bury it with that of his wife in one grave. "But the three times fifty queens that loved Cuchulain saw him appear in his Druid chariot, going through Emain Macha; and they could hear him singing the music of the Sidhe."

Heroes other than Cuchulain figure in the cycle. There is Maeve, a woman who found mingling in the affairs of men more to her taste than staying at home. It is Maeve who urges war against Cuchulain; it is she who is unfaithful to her husband who, knowing of her acts, yet loves her. Little feeling does she show when she is offering her daughter to many a warrior to encourage him to fight, for when the girl learned what her mother had done, "her heart broke with the shame, and the pity came on her, and she fell dead there, and they buried her." Strangely different from her is Deirdre. At Deirdre's birth, Druid signs declared to her father, "It is one account of a daughter belonging to you, that more blood will be shed than ever was shed in Ireland since time and race began. And great heroes and bright candles of the Gael will lose their lives because of her." True to the prophecy, she brings great destruction both on her husband and on countless warriors. Then there is Conaire, whom fate had decreed should die early and who is powerless to resist that fate.

Most charming of all is Emer, the wife of Cuchulain. The men of Ulster had decided that they would seek out a young girl who would be a fitting wife for Cuchulain "that their daughters and wives would not be making so much of him. And, too, they feared lest he would die young and leave no heir after him." It was Emer, whom they deemed most fit, and whom Cuchulain thought worth courting, for "she had the six gifts—the gift of beauty, the gift of voice, the gift of sweet speech, the gift of needlework, the gift of wisdom, the gift of chastity." Having decided to wed Emer, he tells her of his decision; and how surprised he is when she tells him she will consider him after he has proved himself worthy. The poet neglects to mention Emer's attitude when her husband repeatedly falls in love with one woman and another. Apparently, she sees all, but pretends to see almost nothing. Not so, the others in the community who speak of "Eithne Inguba, who loved Cuchulain" or of "Niamh that Cuchulain loved." Only once is Emer enraged—and that against Fand whom Cuchulain had met and loved in the country of the sidhe. Emer had not known of her existence until she came upon Fand who had come to Ulster and to whom Cuchulain made love. Then, as has often been the case since, all of Emer's wrath is vented upon the woman. And, in age old fashion Cuchulain assures Emer he loves her and no other. Note how not unlike that of our own day is their discourse: "I ask then," said Emer, "What was it led you, Cuchulain, to dishonor me before all the women of the province, and before all the women of Ireland, and before all honourable people in the same way? For it was under your shelter I came, and on the strength of your faithfulness; for although you threaten a great quarrel in your pride, it is certain, Cuchulain, you cannot put me away, even if you would try to do it."

"I ask you, Emer," said Cuchulain, "why I may not have my turn in the company of this woman; for in the first place she is well-behaved, comely, well mannered, worthy of a king, this woman from beyond the waves of the great sea; with form and countenance, and high descent; with embroidery and handiness, with sense and quickness; for there is not anything under the skies her husband could ask, but she would do it, even if she had not given her promise. And, O Emer," he said, "you will never find any brave, comely man so good as myself." And then Cuchulain comes to Emer; and the druids give a drink of forgetfulness to Cuchulain and one to Emer as well "that she might forget her jealousy, for the state she was in was no better than his own." And then, to be doubly certain that the whole affair be forgotten, the god of the sea shakes his cloak between Fand and Cuchulain that they should never meet again. Though the gods could mend this affair, they could not hinder Emer's knowing of Aoife, mother of Cuchulain's only son and of Niamh, loved of her hero. Yet she remains faithful to him. When the men of Counought are rising in anger against Cuchulain, it is Emer who tries to keep him from battle. She uses all her methods of persuasion to keep Cuchulain away, even saying, finally, "Here will be Niamh and the poets." And when they dine, at Cuchulain's right hand, are the Druids and poets, and at his left hand, not Emer, but Niamh. Yet when Cuchulain finally does go to fight, it is Emer who is "sitting in her upper room, looking over the plain for some word from the battle." Finally, as Cuchulain's body is brought to her, she weeps, and cries, "I am glad, I am glad, Cuchulain of Muirthemna, I never brought red shame on your face, for any unfaithfulness against you—I have no love for any man. It is sorrowful my stay is after your death." And her life goes from her, and she and Cuchulain are buried in the one grave.

Last of all, and dating several hundred years later than the Cuchulain cycle, is the Fenian cycle. It is a much more matter of fact cycle. Things are not done on so great a scale; there is not the same sweep, vastness, or weirdness. Most of the stories center about Finn and his son, Oisin. There was probably an actual Finn who lived, say some critics, in the third century. But here, again, are mixed much of fact and more of fancy. There are accounts of huntings and enchantments, of a heathen world and of a Christian one; events of the first era and those of about the eighth or ninth century; all strangely intermingled.

Finn was born of mortal parents, and at an early time received great wisdom. His friends accounted for his wisdom more easily than could modern psychologists, for they said that he acquired it quite accidentally by eating from the salmon of knowledge, and drinking from the well of wisdom. Hence, it is Finn who rules more by wisdom than by great strength. Yet he delights in hunting and just in being out of doors, as Finn's first poem shows:

"It is the month of May is the pleasant time; its face is beautiful; the blackbird sings his full song, the living wood is his holding, the cuckoos are singing and ever singing; there is a welcome before the brightness of the summer.

"Summer is lessening the rivers, the swift horses are looking for the pool; the heath spreads out its long hair, the weak white bog-down grows. A wildness comes on the heart of the deer; the sad restless sea is asleep.

"Bees with their little strength carry a load reaped from the flowers; the cattle go up muddy to the mountains; the ant has a good full feast.

"The harp of the woods is playing music; there is colour on the hills, and a haze on the full lakes, and entire peace upon every sail.

"The corncrake is speaking, a loud-voiced poet; the high lonely waterfall is singing a welcome to the warm pool, the talking of the rushes has begun.

"The light swallows are darting; the loudness of music is around the hill; the fat soft mast is budding; there is grass on the trembling bogs.

"The bog is as dark as the feathers of the raven; the cuckoo makes a loud welcome; the speckled salmon is leaping; as strong is the leaping of the swift fighting man.

"The man is gaining; the girl is in her comely growing power; every wood is without fault from the top to the ground, and every wide good plain.

"It is pleasant is the colour of the time; rough winter is gone; every plentiful wood is white; summer is a joyful peace.

"A flock of birds pitches in the meadow; there are sounds in the green fields, there is in them a clear rushing stream.

"There is a hot desire on you for the racing of horses, twisted holly makes a leash for the hound; a bright spear has been shot into the earth, and the flag-flower is golden under it.

"A weak lasting little bird is singing at the top of his voice; the lark is sing clear tidings; May without fault, of beautiful colours.

"I have another story for you; the ox is lowing, the winter is creeping in, the summer is gone. High and cold the wind, low the sun, cries are about us; the sea is quarrelling.

"The ferns are reddened and their shape is hidden; the cry of the wild goose is heard; the cold has caught the wings of the birds; it is the time of ice-frost, hard, unhappy."

Of a caliber no less fine are the rest of the Fianna who hold as essential virtues generosity, truthfulness, bravery, and courtesy. And every man of the Fianna is bound to take no cattle by oppression; to refuse no man cattle or riches; not to fall back before nine fighting men; to further no blood feuds; to know the twelve books of poetry; to excel in certain athletic feats. And chief among the Fianna are the five Druids, five wonderful physicians, five high poets, twelve musicians, and fifty sewing women.

Over them rules Finn. He is a lonely man, for it was beautiful, gentle Sadbh that he had loved and wed. Now Sadbh had refused her love to one of the dark druids; and one day when Finn was far away it was the druid that came in the shape of Finn and lured her away. And in the shape of a fawn, he put her. When Finn returned to find her gone, great was his grief so that for seven years, whenever he could, he sought her. Now one day when Finn was hunting, he found in the forest a young boy, and he seemed to have something of Sadbh in his face. And as it was his son that Finn thought he was, he took him and kept him even with him. And as the boy grew older, he told Finn all he could remember of how a fawn had cared for him there in a great forest held in by cliffs from which there was no escape. Then, it was a dark man with a great stick who used to come to the forest and it afraid of him the fawn was, and he always angry. But one day he came and he struck her with his druid rod and he forced her to follow him. Then Finn knew it was Sadbh that was the mother of the boy. And he called the boy Oisin. Two other companions had the boy Oisin, whelps that had been born while under an enchantment.

Being entirely human, Finn is sometimes seen at a disadvantage, as when he, an old man, pursues Grania whom he loved. When he could have saved the life of Grania's husband, Finn hesitates too long; and the young Diarmuid dies. Unlike Emer, Grania's love changes like the water of a running stream, and it is Finn whom she soon marries. After the battle of the White Strand, it is greater was the power of the Fianna. For at that battle, they opposed most of the kings of the great world. At the time of the conflict, "the creatures of the high air answered to battle, foretelling destruction that would be done that day; and the sea chattered of the losses and the waves gave heavy shouts keening them, and the water beasts roared to one another and the rough hills creaked with the danger of the battle, and the woods trembled mourning the heroes, and the grey stones cried out at their deeds, and the wind sobbed telling them, and the earth shook, foretelling the slaughter, and the cries of the grey armies put a blue cloak over the sun, and the clouds were dark; and the hounds and whelps and the crows, and the witches of the valley, and the powers of the air, and the wolves of the forest, howled from every quarter and on every side of the armies urging them against one another." And "blood rained like a shower on the day of harvest." Yet it is not Finn, unlike his predecessor Cuchulain, who does few deeds of valor, but the other Fianna excel. Finally, the poet says very simply, "many a sword and shield was left broken and many a deed body lying on the ground, and many a fighting man was left with a foolish smile on his face." Yet, other battles come until most of the Fianna die. As for Finn, it is not known how he died. Some say he died at the hands of a great fisherman; but that cannot be true, for a man so great as Finn would not die in that way. Some say he never died, but is living yet. It is a smith who tells how one day he was in the great forest and he came to a cave with a great door. He made a key to fit the lock on the door. And then when he entered the cave he saw huge men lying on the floor of the cave. And in the middle of them all was one of greater size, and the smith knew that the man was Finn. Near him, lay a great horn, so big that the smith could hardly lift it. But he did lift it at the last, and he blew it, and all the men turned over. Then the smith became frightened and he fled and locked the door of the cave and he threw the key in a lake so that no one has been able to find either the key or the cave since. And as he ran away, he heard the men in the cave crying out to him. Others say that some time the great hunting horn of Finn will be sounded three times and then the Fianna will rise up as strong as ever they were. And some say that Finn has been on earth in the shape of some great heroes.

The one really amusing story of the cycle, one of later date than the others, centers about Oisin, son of Finn. He had been lured by a beautiful woman to the Country of the Ever Young, and there he had married her. But after living a thousand years in the land where there was always plenty, where there was nothing that one wanted that he did not have, Oisin came back to Ireland. Then much like Rip Van Winkle, it was the changes that so amazed him that he knew not what to think. Most disconcerting to him is "Patrick of the closed up mind." Patrick tries to convert Oisin to the Christian faith; but they are the two that never can agree. For it is Oisin who knows that the good old days were best, as he tells Patrick, "I often saw a quarter of blackbird bigger than your quarter of beef, and a rowan berry as big as your churn of butter, and an ivy leaf as big as your griddle of bread." And "I have heard music was sweeter than your music, however much you are praising your clerks: the song of the blackbird in Leiter Laoi, and the sound of Finn's horn; the very sweet thrush of the Valley of the Shadow, or the sound of the boats striking the strand. The cry of the hounds was better to me than the noise of your schools, Patrick." Nor can Oisin understand why Patrick's religion should be so very serious, why Patrick should believe so in punishment, and last of all why Finn the open handed head of the Fianna should be in "the hands of devils or demons." Enlightening as is the whole discourse of Finn and Patrick, a few illustrations will prove interesting.

Patrick: "Finn is in bonds in Hell, the pleasant man that gave out gold; in satisfaction for his disrespect to God, he is under grief in the house of pain."

Oisin: "If the sons of Morna were within it, or the strong men of the sons of Baiscue, they would take Finn out of it, or they would have the house for themselves . . . O Patrick, the story is pitiful, the King of the Fianna to be under locks; a heart without envy, without hatred, a heart hard in earning victory."

Patrick: "Make right repentance now, before you know when your end is coming; God is better for one hour than the whole of the Fianna of Ireland."

Oisin: "How could it be that God or his priests could be better men than Finn, the king of the Fianna, a generous man without crookness?

"If there be a place above or below better than the Heaven of God, it is there Finn would go, and all that are with him of his people.

"You say that a generous man never goes to the hell of pain; there was not one among the Fianna that was not generous to all. Ask of God, Patrick, does he remember when the Fianna were alive, or has He seen east or west any man better than themselves in their fighting.

"The Fianna used not to be saying treachery; we never had the name of telling lies. By truth and the strength of our hands we came safe out of every battle.

"There never sat a priest, in a church, though you think it sweet to be singing psalms, was better to his word than the Fianna, or more generous than Finn himself.

"If my comrades were living tonight, I would take no pleasure in crooning in the church; as they are not living now, the rough voice of the bells has deafened me.

"Och! In the place of battles and heavy fights, where I used to have my place and take my pleasure, the crozier of Patrick being carried, and his clerks at their quarreling." Thus

Oisin, preferring Hell with Finn to Heaven without him, silences, Patrick.

As one reads the Celtic stories, he is impressed with the Celts' beliefs, their appreciation of the arts, and their love of nature. Their religion is a fatalistic one. It is fate that decrees that Cuchulain shall die young, fate that decrees that Deirdre shall cause destruction to many; fate that ordains that a wild boar will kill Diarmuid; and in every case, the prophecies or decrees of fate are fulfilled. Yet, in their religion there is no idea of punishment, and very little that is unpleasant. When men and women die. they become gods and godesses maintaining many of their human qualities. Their abiding place, the sidhe or Land of the Ever Young, is not far away. Most people say it is in the green mounds of Ireland; others that it is over the seas and may be seen on a clear day from the western coast of Ireland. Near as it seems, it always recedes before those in search of it. Here is neither death, nor sin, nor strife; here are "perpetual feats, benevolence without contention; beauty, love, and every enjoyment that the heart can think of." Often the gods leave their home and ride unseen in the bosom of the wind. They love to carry mortals to their fairy home; and once a mortal yields to them he is forever in their power. It is mystic music of the sidhe, that the gods play—music that entices him whom the gods desire—and only he can hear it. As the gods are greatly interested in mortals, they enter into their battles and either help or hinder men.

The old belief in animism, that is, giving souls and human intelligence to all, abounds in Celtic literature. For example, once "the land knew its rightful owner and yielded harvests such as were never known;" a man speaks to his boat "and the spirit of the boat heard him and it leaped forward eagerly:" arms deal destruction almost of their own volition. The stories fairly bristle also with beliefs in magic. One man, for example, after killing his enemy, takes his brain and mingles it with lime to make bullets that have human intelligence. The Tuaha de Dananan first say spells over their spears and then hurl the spears at the shadows of men who die the moment their shadows are touched.

Music and poetry are highly revered by the early Celts. Again, and again, one reads, "and what always quieted Cuchulain best was the singing of songs and rhymes before him;" and the Children of Lir were singing "sweet music of the Sidhe that would put the men of earth to sleep; and there was no music in the world equal to it;" or "everyone heard the music of the birds and it is happy and contented he was after hearing it." Especially honored and that above all others are the poets. At feasts, it is they who are at the king's right hand; they who are given gifts for their poetry. As a part of every young man's training he was taught the twelve books of poetry and it was no man who could be a leader if he did not himself compose verse. Their verse and prose, is alive with color. Play things, birds, beasts, clothing, weapons, people, and nature are all described colorfully. Red, gold, purple, green, and silver predominate. The chariots are made of fine wood with wicker-work newly polished, the yoke curved, with silver ornaments on them; they have two black wheels, and soft looped yellow reins. One of the women of the sidhe has this description:

"He saw at the side of a well a woman, with a bright comb of silver and gold, and she washing in a silver basin, having four golden birds on it, and little bright purple stones set in the rim of the basin. A beautiful purple cloak she had, and silver fringes to it, and a gold brooch; and she had on her a dress of green silk with a long hood embroidered in red gold, and wonderful clasps of gold and silver on her breasts and on her shoulders. The sunlight was falling on her, so that the gold and the green silk were shining out. Two plaits of hair she had, four locks in each plait, and a bead at the point of every lock, and the colour of her hair was like yellow flags in summer, or like red gold after it is rubbed.

"There she was, letting down her hair to wash it, and her arms out through the sleeve holes of her shift. Her soft hands were as white as the snow of a single night, and her eyes as blue as any blue flower, and her lips as red as the berries of the rowan-tree, and her body as white as the foam of a wave. The bright light of the moon was in her face, the highness of pride in her eyebrows, a dimple of delight in each of her cheeks, the light of wooing in her eyes, and when she walked she had a step that was steady and even, like the walk of a queen."

Gruesome and yet colorful is the description of the seer whom Queen Maeve consulted, for as she waited, "Her garment changed to dusky red and from the point of a sword held upright, blood dripped, and one by one the drops fell on the queen till all her cloak and garments and the charriot floor ran red with blood."

The early Irish so loved nature, that throughout their literature are, not only whole passages showing their love of it;

but even their descriptions of people, again and again, abound in nature similes. Of Deirdre, it is told, "She learned the zigzag flight of the long billed snipe, she knew the otter's marshy lair, and where the grouse and wild duck made their nests. She fed the timid swan, wild, trustful as herself, and made a dear companion of a fox that followed her as though it were a dog; and once, when Levarcam stayed below, she climbed the dizzy height where golden eagles had built their nests upon the mountain's crest, and smoothed the eaglets with her own soft hand." One of the women of the sidhe answers to this description, "Red as a fox glove were her cheeks and blue as the spring hyacinths beneath the forest trees her sparkling eyes. Like pearls, her teeth shone white above her lips, and all her skin was fair as the white foam that dances on the wave. Around her fell, in waving folds of green, a cloak such as the fairy women wear, which hides them from the eyes of mortal men."

No one, more than Oisin, the last of the great heroes, better appreciated the days of the Fianna, the days of a departed glory. The last of Finn's followers, in a land of Christians, he thus bewails his present state:

"It is long the clouds are over me to-night! It is long last night was; although this day is long, yesterday was longer again to me; every day that comes is long to me!

"That is not the way I used to be, without fighting, without battles, without learning feats, without young girls, without music, without harps, without bruising bones, without great deeds; without increase of learning, without generosity, without drinking at feasts, without courting, without hunting, the two trades I was used to; without going out to battle, Ochone! the want of them is sorrowful to me.

"No hunting of deer or stag, it is not like that I would wish to be; no leashes for our hunts, no hounds; it is long the clouds are over me to-night!

"Without rising up to do bravery as we were used, without playing as we had a mind; without swimming of our fighting men in the lake; it is long the clouds are over me to-night!

"There is no one at all in the world the way I am; it is a pity the way I am; an old man dragging stones; it is long the clouds are over me to-night!

"I am the last of the Fianna, great Oisin, son of Finn, listening to the voice of bells; it is long the clouds are over me tonight!"

For over fifty years, some few playrights, poets, and novelists have found in this early Celtic literature, inspiration for their writings. Most delightful, and utterly in the spirit of the Celt, are Yeats' "The Land of Heart's Desire;" Synge's "Deirdre;" and James Stephen's *Deirdre*. But one can not truly say that these writers, or that Lady Augusta Gregory or George W. Russell has *created* a Celtic Mythology. The old literature like a buried gem, only recently has been brought to light; and the charm of the original stories is greater than that of its adaptations.

THE GUY UPSTAIRS

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Egbert H. van Delden

Cast of Characters

Lefty
Pietro
A Guard
A Priest
The Governor's Secretary

Scene: *The interiors of two prison cells viewed through the iron bars forming their front. Between the cells is a solid wall of masonry making it impossible for the occupants at any time to see each other. Thr furniture consists of the customary iron cot and wash bowl. The cells are in semi-darkness, and what little light there is seems to possess a ghastly greenish tinge.*

At curtain the two prisoners can be seen in their cells. At the left, Pietro *is kneeling on the floor in an attitude of prayer. At the right,* Lefty *is seen sprawled ungracefully upon a cot. They are both dressed in conventional prison garb.* Lefty *slowly arises and stretches himself, giving vent to a capacious yawn. He is still in his early thirties, crude, yet likeable, and with all the cock-sureness of an insurance salesman.* Pietro *is older than* Lefty *and uses the broken English of one having come from Italy not long ago.* Lefty *pulls out a package of cheap cigarettes and begins to search for a match. Failing to find one, he approaches the bars of the cell.*

Lefty.—What do you say there, Wop, slide over a box of matches, will you? (*There is a moment of silence.* Lefty *picks up a shoe or some convenient object and pounds upon the dividing wall.*)

Pietro.—Please, signor.

Lefty.—Why don't you answer then? Come on, snap out of the ether, Spaghetti, I'm asking you for a box of matches. Matches, matches—get me?

Pietro (*Arising and approaching the bars.*)—What's the trouble with you? What you want? Please, mi amigo, leave me alone so I can ask Dio forgiveness for my sins.

Lefty.—Holy Christ, you must have plenty of them. All you've done ever since you've been here is to bellyache on your knees. Well, toss me a light and then you can go back and beg "Dio" for a pair of wings and a harp. You're going to need them in less than an hour.

Pietro.—You animale! If you take the name of God like that. . .

Lefty.—Who the Hell's going to stop me? Say, you pie-faced mutt, I asked for a match, not for any advice. What do you think this is anyway? This ain't no Salvation Army meeting.

Pietro (*Biting his fingers in an attempt to hold back the anger rising within him*).—I no got no match, signor, so please you leave me to my prayers.

Lefty.—Aw, you give me a pain. Prayers! Prayers! Do you think praying's going to get you out of the chair? Not much! Can that stuff!

Pietro.—Shut up, you. I no want to bother with you, so please you do not hit the ceiling so fast again.

Lefty.—All right, go ahead, nobody's stopping you. Hell! Praying's for women and kids what don't know any better. It gets me how you ever had the guts to croak a guy.

(Lefty *lies down while* Pietro *kneels again near the cot in his cell. A guard enters from the right. He is a genial, kindly man, dressed in uniform. He peers in* Pietro's *cell and sees him on his knees bending over the cot.*)

Guard.—What's the matter there, Fifty-seven, are you sick? Do you want me to go get you a shot of brandy to brace you up?

Lefty (*Coming to the bars at the sound of the guard's voice*).—Sick of prison, maybe. Huh! He's scared stiff of being bumped off, that's all. Got a yellow streak a mile wide down his back.

Guard (*To* Lefty).—Well, maybe you won't be feeling any too chipper yourself in an hour. You're due to go just fifteen minutes after him.

Lefty (*Laughing*).—Yeah? Say, you got me all wrong, Captain, not a chance! Let's have a match, will you?

Guard (*Tossing him a box of matches*).—Sure, anything else you want? This is the day you can have anything you take a fancy to and no questions asked. The prison pays the bill.

Lefty.—That's O. K. with me, Chief. I ain't going to get bumped off but you can bring me a slug of Old Crow just the same.

Guard.—All right, but I've heard young sparrows chirp like that before. Something might slip up, you never *can* tell, you know.

Lefty (*Lighting a cigarette*).—Maybe *you* can't, but I can! You boys ain't never going to nail me up in no pine box. No siree, I've had three postponements already.

Guard (*Making a suggestive gesture with his forefinger.*)—Yes, but, remember,—"three times and—out!"

Lefty (*Grinning*).—Sure, out of jail.

Guard.—Well, that's the spirit, anyway. (*To* PIETRO.) Did you hear what he said, Fifty-seven, about three postponements? Just you keep a stiff upper lip and you may get one right up to the last minute.

Pietro.—Grazia, signor. (*The guard gives a little salute and leaves left.*)

Lefty (*Returning the salute*).—So long, Skipper. Thanks for the matches.

Pietro (*Knocking timidly on the wall*).—Tell me please, mi amigo, where you get postponementi. Do they give me one if I ask?

Lefty (*Derisively*).—Changed your mind, eh? Not so damned anxious any more to take the electric elevator up to visit your friend "Dio," are you?

Pietro.—You stubito, I no afraid to die.

Lefty.—Oh no, of course not, none of us are. Say, cut the comedy, you're among friends. We're all in the same boat and the old tub's leaking. Well, get this straight, if you've got pull you get out, and if you haven't got pull they yank a switch on you. Simple, see?

Pietro.—Si, si, but this "pull" that you say,—what is this thing?

Lefty.—Pull? Why—er, pull's just,—well, you know how it is, pull's just pull, that's all. Money and politics is the best way to get it, I guess. You've got to stand in with the big shots. You've got friends, ain't you?

Pietro.—Nobody to help me but Dio.

Lefty.—Well, if that's all you've got to depend on, something tells me you're going to get a free electric treatment. It's good for your nerves, all right, but in this dive they don't kill or cure, they kill *and* cure.

Pietro.—How can you fool like that when you must come right after me?

Lefty.—After you? (*Laughing.*) Gee, that's a hot one! Say, Wop, I ain't worrying, I've got friends, I have. You don't think my gang's going to let them make any storage battery out of me, do you? Why Hell, Regan says that all they've been doing is waiting until my case blows over and the public forgets about me, then I'll get my pardon straight from the Big Chief himself. Don't you go worrying about me, kiddo, you've got plenty of troubles of your own.

Pietro (*Sighing and mopping his brow with a big red handkerchief*).—Si, si, that is very true. (*He gets down on his knees and commences to pray again.*)

Lefty.—Say, Wop. (PIETRO *does not answer.*) Well, wouldn't that jar you? He's at it again!

(LEFTY *leans back against the wall smoking. The guard enters followed by a priest. He unlocks the door and admits the priest to* PIETRO'S *cell, then re-locking it, he exits.*)

Priest.—My son, I come in the name of the Heavenly Father to prepare you for your journey from this poor earth. For He saith, "He who repents his sins, in the name of the Lord, for him shall be the kingdom of Heaven."

Pietro.—Caro padre, I have prayed all night but it seems to do no good to me. All I ask is to be pardon, not for me, but so I can work for my poor wife and children. I can not see why it is they, who do nothing, should suffer for me.

Priest.—My son, it is not given us poor mortals to fathom the inscrutable wisdom of God. We who are no more than a grain of dust in the wind can ill divine the acts of the Almighty. Yet we can ever find comfort in the knowledge of God's immutable love and tenderness for His children. If, in His infinite understanding, He so wills that you should remain upon this earth a little longer, even though you are in the shadow of the chair itself, you need have no fear, for He will save you.

Lefty.—The same old applesauce! Why don't you put on a new record once in a while?

Pietro.—Dio no let them kill me—!

Lefty.—Oh no! How could anyone be so heartless?

Priest (*To* LEFTY).—My good man, can you not find it in your heart even to respect these last sacred moments of one who is so soon to travel the Eternal Road, a journey which all of us must some day make alone, a pathway of which we cannot know the end?

Lefty.—Don't mind me, I ain't aiming to spoil your party. Keep right on with your knitting.

Pietro.—But Padre, my wife and children . . .

Priest.—Be unafraid. Even though you are in darkness, God will show you the light, and if you are weak, He will give you strength.

Pietro.—But padre, who will take care of them? No one! You comprende they need me? I cannot die—now.

Priest.—Come, the time is passing rapidly. God will take care of your wife and children. Trust in Him. Had you only trusted in Him and not taken vengeance into your own hands you would not be here today.

Pietro.—Ah! But my daughter! My poor Mariette, what will you do now? (*with an unexpected show of virulence.*) That accursed Pasquale! That pig! I am glad, glad that I stabbed his black heart. He will wrong no more innocent young girls.

Priest (*Shaking his head sadly*).—Instead of humble penitence, you find secret pleasure in your sin of sins. Do you not know that the Bible commands, "Thou shalt not kill"?

Lefty.—That's a hot one! Tell that to the warden and see if they'll call off this little tea party they're fixing to hold for the Wop. Yes, they will,—in the pig's neck!

Pietro.—Dio can not be so mad at me that He . . .

Priest.—My son, God is all-merciful. His compassion passeth all understanding, His heart overflows with tenderness for all those who accept Him. Repent your sins, trust in Him, and you will see that God is kindness itself.

Lefty.—Yes, and so's your old man! Say, if this bird what you're always pointing to with your eyes glued to the ceiling like; well, if He's kindness itself, I'd hate to bump into your idea of a hard guy! Why, all He does is rattle the dice box and throws the cubes, and take it from me, He has a dog-goned good laugh when our lives turn out to be craps.

Priest.—My friend, God does not laugh at human frailties, he weeps. With His tender sympathy and His tears He binds the wounds of those who stumble against the rocks of adversity.

Lefty.—Aw, that's all a grand stand play. Don't let that fox you! He sticks the rocks in our way, don't He, and He makes us so inside that we'll go and fall over them, too. Oh, it's a great game for Him, all right, a dead cinch. All His cards are marked and we play it blind, see? And if we try to go out and do different, well—then He gives us a little push, just to see what we'll be damn fool enough to do next.

Priest.—It is only by overcoming temptations on earth that we can work out our Eternal Salvation. God understands that the testing is often harsh and that we sometimes slip and do wrong, but the forgiveness of God is infinite, and He welcomes all sinners who repent their sins into the kingdom of God with open arms. Come, let us pray.

Lefty.—Immediately afterwards the ushers will please take up the collection!

(*The* PRIEST *and* PIETRO *kneel upon the floor.*)

Priest (*In the peculiar sing-song of stereotyped phrases.*) Oh Merciful Father, listen to the prayers of a poor sinner, who upon bended knees asks forgiveness for his sins. May You, in Your divine compassion wrap the warm mantle of Your love about his form as he faces the dread ordeal of death. May You, in Your infinite tenderness, have pity for one who has taken the righting of a wrong into his own hands, not realizing that You in Your omnipotence would punish the malefactor. Oh God, may You in Your almighty wisdom forgive this guilty one who in his blindness has killed a brother in cold blood.

Pietro.—You excuse me, padre, but please you tell to me what you mean by this "in cold blood".

Priest.—It only means that after you found out Pasquale had wronged your daughter you were angry and determined to kill him for it, and then you went out and stabbed him.

Pietro.—But it was not like that! I did not swear to kill Pasquale like that man say. No, even when my friend Nicholas Imperato asks me about it I say that we live now in America and that I would not kill him.

Priest.—Did you tell all that to the lawyers in the court?

Pietro.—Sure, I tell them that. But Nick he had gone to Italy and so they did not believe me. I could not understand very well what they mean. They say I go look for Pasquale but I meet him on the street and I say nothing to him. Not one thing! But he stop and he laugh when he see me. He call out after me, "Your Mariette was no good girl, anyway." All of a sudden I can stand it no longer and I run toward him. He only stand there and smile,—yes, he laugh. I pull out my knife and straight at his heart I stab. (*Gesticulating.*) . . . so! Dio knows, padre, that I did not swear to kill him. You believe me, no?

Priest.—I believe you, Pietro, have courage. If what you have just said is true, you have been condemned unjustly. I must hurry and try to arrange a postponement now and later on we can get in touch with your friend Nicholas. I'll telephone the governor immediately. (*Calling to the guard.*) O'Connell! O'Connell!

Guard (*Entering*).—It isn't time yet, father. (*He opens the cell door for the priest and then re-locks it. They both leave together talking in muffled tones.*)

Pietro.—Grazia, Dio. (*Kneeling to pray.*) Padre in Heaven, at this time when I need You, please help me. I have always tried to do what I think is right; I have been good to my wife and children, I have gone to mass every Sunday and to Confession twice every month. Now, Padre, I ask only that You give to me one more chance . . .

Lefty.—Aw, pipe down! How you birds expect anyone to ever listen to that soft soap is beyond me! I suppose you think that all your "Dio" has to do is listen to poor saps like you ask for favors, a million or so at a time, twenty-four hours a day, and seven days a week. Huh! You birds sure are stuck on yourselves. Important, ain't you? Imagine a million guys on their knees at the same time, all lined up in a row, pawing the air with their hands and begging for special favors for themselves! But when it comes to the Guy Upstairs,—well, He only looks out of the window once in a while and tells Saint Pete to turn loose some rain on the day the church Sunday school goes on a picnic.

Pietro.—You are one wicked man. You surely will roast in Hell forever for your sins.

Lefty.—You notice how scared I am, don't you? Say, Wop, you're even worse off than I thought you were. Hell? There ain't no Hell. And if there were, you can bet it'd be too damn crowded to let any more in. They'd never miss me out of the millions and millions there. Aw, what's the use, you don't know what it's all about, anyway. Go on back to your praying, you old woman, if you think it's going to do you any good.

Pietro.—Of course it will do good for me. Is not the chaplain even now telephoning the governor? But you, you surely will go straight to Hell.

Lefty.—Lay off that racket. I'd rather go there any time than to Heaven! All there is up there is fat bellied priests and milk sops like you, but in Hell,—oh boy, all the keen looking women and good sports for company, guys what did their killing for the love of it and are damn proud of themselves,—that'd be worth while, that would.

(PIETRO *turns aside in disgust and resumes his supplications.* LEFTY *lies down upon the cot. After a moment the guard and a young man enter. The latter has a slip of paper in his hand which he scrutinizes closely in the dim light.*)

Young Man (*To guard, showing him the paper*).—Can you make out the number that the clerk wrote here for me, officer?

Guard (*Examining the paper closely*).—That's a five and a seven, I believe, sir.

Young Man (*Examining it again.*)—Hm, I guess you're right,—fifty-seven. He makes wretched figures though, doesn't he?

(*At the mention of his number* PIETRO *excitedly comes to the bars.* LEFTY *raises himself up on his elbow displaying a mild interest.*)

Guard.—Yes, sir but we can't be too particular you know, we have to take what we can get. This trusty is a safecracker, but before him we had a forger who made beautiful figures. We were all sorry to lose him when his time was up.

Pietro (*Anxiously*).—What is it, captain, my postponimenti?

Guard.—No, not a postponement, Fifty-seven, nor even a commutation of sentence, but something better than that,—a full pardon, and brought here by the governor's own secretary himself!

Young Man (*To Guard*).—Is this the gentlemen that I brought the pardon for?

Guard.—That's him,—That's Fifty-seven.

Young Man.—Ah, yes, the governor wanted me to tell you that he has listened to the pleas of your friends, that he made an exhaustive review of your case, and after due consideration of the evidence has granted you a full pardon. He expressly requested that I congratulate you in his stead.

Pietro.—That means that I am to be—free?

Young Man.—Yes, the warden has your pardon now and you should be released in a day or so. (*To the guard.*) That's right, isn't it, officer?

Guard.—Yes, sir, we have a regular system for discharging prisoners. It only takes a day or so.

Pietro.—Ah, Dio . . .

Young Man.—Well, I must go now. Good day, and good luck.

Pietro.—Grazia, signor, grazia.

(*The young man and the guard exit right.*)

Pietro.—Well, Lefty, do you not see? Is it not like I tell you?

Lefty.—Aw, shut your trap, will you? You give me a pain in the neck. Don't go trying to rub it in or I'll bust you one. See?

Pietro.—Si, but my friend . . .

Lefty.—I'm not your friend, you damned Guinea. You spaghetti stranglers come over here to this country and in two weeks you think you own the whole works. Like as not some Black Hand Gang got you your release.

Pietro.—It is very true what you say that I have not been in this country for long, but I am no Blackhander, I am a good man.

Lefty.—You Wops are all alike. Our laws don't mean nothing to you, you think you can trample all over us native born Americans.

Pietro.—I do not comprende what you mean, but maybe if you pray to Dio, He will send to you one release.

Lefty.—Don't be a sap. Your "Dio" didn't have nothing to do with that pardon. You heard what that guy said, didn't you? You've got friends, that's all. Wop votes, . . . that's what got you out!

Pietro.—That is not so, . . . you are a bad man.

Lefty.—Well, I ain't no angel, but get this straight, they ain't never going to give me the bumps! My gang'll yank me out of this dump pronto. Just watch and see if they don't!

(*The priest enters right, followed by the guard.*)

Pietro.—Caro padre, Dio has sent to me a pardon! He has answered all of my prayers.

Priest.—A pardon, Pietro? Are you sure?

(*He turns toward the guard.*)

Guard.—That's right, father.

Priest.—And so soon? Why, it can't be possible! I only telephoned for a postponement a short while ago so that later on they could investigate the case.

Lefty.—See? What's I tell you? It wasn't any "Dio" what got you out, . . . it was the Wop votes of one of those damn Italiano-Americano Societies, or some such crap as that.

Pietro.—Padre, you do not believe what he say?

Priest.—No, Pietro, don't waste time listening to him, but since God has been so good to you you should get right down on your knees now and thank Him with all your heart while I am endeavoring to comfort a little this poor man who is so soon to go to the chair.

Lefty.—Where do you get that stuff. . . chair? Quit trying to scare me, will you?

Guard (*Opening the door to admit the priest*).—That's straight dope he's giving you, Lefty, you'd better pray while the praying's still good.

Priest.—Yes, my son, repent your sins and put your faith in the eternal love of God.

Lefty.—Eternal love, Hell! What is this, anyway, a frame-up? My gang wouldn't let me get juiced. Haven't you heard?

Guard (*Locking the door.*)—Not a word! You've got just twenty minutes more. I'm going right now to make sure that everything's ready for you.

(*He starts to leave left.*)

Lefty.—Wait a minute, will you? Say, pal, you ain't kidding me, are you?

Guard.—Not unless you think it's a joke to go to the chair.

Lefty.—Joke? Hell, that ain't no joke! Can't I get in touch with Regan? Something's got to be done.

Guard.—Take my advice, Lefty, and don't depend too much on a last minute postponement. You'd better make your peace with God while you can.

(*He leaves left.*)

Lefty.—But . . . my God, man . . . I . . .

Priest.—My son, you have just called upon the only One who can help you in this period of trial and tribulation.

Lefty.—Damn you, get the Hell out of here! It's all your fault, anyway.

Priest.—I do not come . . .

Lefty.—Leave me alone, won't you?

Pietro.—Lefty, please you listen to the padre what he say.

Priest.—I do not come to mock at your misfortunes, my friend, but only to sympathize. My heart bleeds that one who does not "believe" should go to the chair. It must be terrible to die not having faith!

Lefty (*Savagely*).—I ain't going to die! It's a dirty trick, that's what it is.

Priest.—My son, be unafraid . . .

Lefty.—That's easy enough for you to say,—you ain't going to get bumped off in no twenty minutes. But don't you worry, I ain't either,—the gang won't desert me.

Pietro.—Please, mi amigo, do what the padre tells you.

Lefty.—Aw, pipe down,—all of you! Give a guy a chance. Leave me alone, will you?

(*He sinks down upon the cot.*)

Priest.—Expel hate from your heart, my son, and allow its place to be taken by love.

Lefty (*Thinking aloud*).—They wouldn't ditch a guy! Regan said they'd get me out. He told me not to worry.

Priest.—He that has not felt love in his heart at least once has never learned what it is to live.

Lefty.—Huh! That ain't what I'm worrying about,—it's how to keep on living.

Priest.—To become incapable of loving or of being loved, is death in life. To cease to live is sometimes a redemption. It is better to die thus than to live the death in life.

Lefty.—Say, what the Hell are you chirping about, anyway? Aren't you gone yet?

Priest.—For God so loved the world . . .

Lefty.—God love . . . ? What a laugh! I suppose you'll be telling me next that God loves me so much he's going to make sure that I'm bumped off properly.

Priest.—Everything that God does has a significance and a divine importance. He who sees even the sparrows fall has an abundance of love in His heart for you, one of His own children.

Lefty.—Bunk!

Priest.—But first you must love and have faith in God. Only he who loves truly is able to make himself loved.

Pietro.—That is very true, Lefty. Here, padre, here is my crucifix for him.

(PIETRO *pushes the crucifix beyond the bars. The priest gets it and offers it to Lefty.*)

Lefty (*Rising*).—You want to give this—to me?

Pietro.—Si, mi amigo, and if you pray to Dio you will get release too.

Lefty.—You're a good guy, Pietro, and you mean well, but God ain't doing any favors for the likes of me.

(*A gong rings.*)

Lefty (*Starting*).—What's that?

Priest.—That was to have been Pietro's bell. Only fifteen minutes remain, the next one will be for you. Come, my son.

Lefty.—Hell, no, ain't it bad enough when you're going to be bumped off at thirty-two? Leave me alone. Beat it! I want to think, I want to—think.

(*He sinks down upon the cot, his head bowed upon his hands.*)

Priest.—I will go, but for the good of your immortal soul, my son, repent your sins before Almighty God . . . before it is too late! (*Calling*) O'Connell! O'Con . . .

Lefty.—Wait! Don't go yet, mister. Please, I ain't such a bad guy . . . honest I ain't. Maybe you can help me . .

Priest.—I am glad, my son, very glad for your sake.

Lefty.—I ain't never had a chance, that's all.

Priest.—Let us pray.

Lefty.—I've done some dirty things, all right, but if I once get out of this dump I'm going straight, and I mean it too. I ain't kidding . . .

Priest.—O Heavenly Father, have mercy upon this poor sinner who . . .

Lefty.—You don't need to tell God all that. He knows all about it! Just tell him I'm sorry and I want to be let off.

Priest (*Praying*).—Forgive this erring brother who has . .

Lefty.—That's it, that's it! I didn't really mean to croak him, but he reached for his gat so I had to sock him. It was self defense, that's what it was.

Priest.—Confess your sins for . . .

Lefty (*Hysterically*).—Honest, I didn't mean it. I didn't expect my blackjack would crush his skull. That ain't my line. I'm a second story guy, I am, but this bird put up a racket. It was self defense, I tell you,—I couldn't let him plug me, could I? The gang was in on it and they said if I didn't squeal they'd buy me off, but they ditched me, the dirty . . .

(*The guard enters hurriedly.*)

Guard.—Excuse me just a moment, father, I've got something important here for number Twenty-nine.

Lefty.—What is it, pal, a pardon? Holy Smokes, Pietro, your "Dio" sure works like greased lightning.

Guard.—We've just received over the telephone a postponement for Pietro Abruzzo who was to have been electrocuted today and . . .

Pietro.—That is me,—but that man say . . .

Guard.—Yes, yes, I know, and then we found that the pardon was really for Lefty. That dumb safe-cracking trusty at the desk wrote the figures so badly that we got twenty-nine mixed up with fifty-seven, and so . . .

Lefty.—So I almost got bumped off for Pietro, and Pietro almost got set loose for me?

Guard.—Ha, ha, yes, that's it exactly.

Lefty.—Ha, ha—huh!

Guard.—But at the same time, if it hadn't been for that dumb trusty's mixing up the pardon, Pietro would have been in the chair ten minutes ago, and his postponement would have been a post mortem.

Pietro.—Oh Dio, grazia.

Priest (*Bowing his head*).—Let us all give thanks to the Ever Living God, for He works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

Lefty.—Like Hell we will—after almost getting me bumped off! What do you think I am? Let this guy out, Skipper, and then go and pack my bag, my gang is waiting to see me. (*He leans back complacently against the wall.*) And you'd better snap it up too, they've got *some* pull, they have—and they never forget!

CURTAIN

THIS FELLOW OF INFINITE JEST

By Charles B. Shaw

"My life," wrote Thomas Hood in an honest mournful moment, "has been one long disease." From the same hand came a generous share of the world's funniest verse. The contrast typifies his life. Brutal fact and gentle fancy were constantly opposed; stimulus and response were completely at variance; hardship, disappointment, pain, poverty, frustrations and sorrow consistently produced high spirits, good humor, gayety, merriment, jocularity and the will to amuse others. Rarely is a life such a thorough-going contradiction. Racked with pain, he penned a jesting lyric; cramped and depressed by poverty, he joked with the world in a comic volume; ambitious to scale Parnassian summits, he was forced by *vox populi* to dwell among the foot-hills of pot-boilers and puns. Sick, poor, thwarted, he fronted the world in false-face, creating for his fellows and finding for himself an astounding measure of happiness. Here, if ever, was "a brave man struggling in the storms of fate."

Though he was born a Cockney, the immediate roots of Hood's family tree burrowed back to the north coast. Diversely accomplished uncles—one a tutor and minister, one a grocer, and one a saddler and butcher—lived most of their lives in the little town of Erroll, near the Firth of Tay. Here it is recorded that this last uncle was commonly regarded as halliket (crazy); but that there was ingrained sufficient Scottish shrewdness to secure for him the reputation of a "gear gatherin' carle, who keepit a gey hard grip o' the bawbees."

Hood's father, his apprenticeship to a bookseller ended, hastened south to London, the great metropolitan centre of printing and book distribution; eventually to become partner in a publishing house—"an active, persevering, punctilious man of business." His acumen is indicated by the fact that he was among the first to open up the book trade with America. He married the sister of Robert Sands, an engraver who enjoyed a considerable contemporary reputation. Thomas, the second son, in his veins a queer mixture of Scotch-English blood, printer's ink, engraver's varnish and variegated maleficent bacilli, was born on May 23, 1799.

Of his childhood little is known or is conjecturable. His first school was presided over by the Misses Hogsflesh—ladies who may enjoy a tenuous hope of literary immortality as actual sisters of the patronymically sensitive *Mr. H.* of Lamb's unhonored farce. Of these and subsequent schooldays he wrote in later years in an irreverent, exaggerated vein of gay malice and truthful unsentimentality. "I yet recall, with wonder, the occasional visits of grown-up ex-scholars to their old school, all in a flutter of gratitude and sensibility at recognizing the spot where they had been caned, horsed, and flogged and gagged, and brimstoned-and-treacled, and blackdosed and stickjawed and kibed and fined—where they had caught the measles and the mumps, and had been over-tasked and undertaught!" He enlarges on the subject in his mock *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Clapham Academy:*

> There I was birch'd! there I was bred!
> There like a little Adam fed
>   From Learning's woeful tree!
> The weary tasks I used to con!—
> The hopeless leaves I wept upon!—
>   Most fruitless leaves to me!—

When the boy was twelve years old his father died. With the family left in straitened circumstances he could be persuaded to stay in school only a year or two longer. Then, like Lamb, he became "something in the City" (a change commemorated in that rarity—a humorous sonnet); deserting one monotonous desk for another—little more remunerative—in the office of a firm of merchants engaged in the Russian trade.

The work was as irksome to body as to spirit, and a consequent breakdown in health forced a change of occupation. The youngster, with a flair for drawing and with the example of his maternal uncle as stimulus ventured in a casual way upon the engraver's craft. A steady continuance of this confining work became obviously unwise; he found that "by too much sitting he had hatched a whole brood of complaints"; his health again gave way; and, about the time Boney was exiled to Elba, the sixteen-year-old youth was deported to "stout and original Scotland," there to rest while visiting his father's relatives in Dundee. It was entered upon as a brief holiday trip: he remained two years.

His reminiscences give the high lights of this sojourn.

"Nature, fortunately for myself, had gifted me with a taste for reading, which the languor of ill-health, inclining me to sedentary habits, helped materially to encourage. Whatever books, good, bad, or indifferent, happened to come within my reach, were perused with the greatest avidity. Whenever the weather permitted, which was generally when there were no new books to the fore, I haunted the banks and braes, or paid flying visits to the burns, with a rod intended to punish that rising generation amongst fishes called trout. But I whipped in vain. Trout there were in plenty, but like obstinate double teeth, with a bad operator, they would neither be pulled out nor come out of themselves."

Days were not all given to fishing and reading, though throughout his life they continued to be his chief amusements. Sketching and desultory engraving were kept up. He played a skillful game of chess; he practised—less skillfully—on the flute; he indulged in long walks, long conversations and long letters with a small group of intimates; in brief, he led the normal life of an intelligent youth.

Bleak or bonnie, as one chooses to find it, Dundee is seldom included in the lists of health resorts. With Hood, however, "the bracing breezes of the North" and the unconstrained, free-roaming, happily self-indulgent existence of these two years accomplished temporarily the desired result. London in the autumn of 1817 heard whistling along Cheapside and across the Bloody Bridge at Sloane Square not the puny boy of pre-Scotch days but a reinvigorated, enthusiastic, determined young man.

Literary and artistic ambitions shared his thoughts. He wrote to a friend: "Truly I am T. Hood, *scripsit et sculpsit*. I am engraving and writing prose and poetry by turns." He was dependent on the former for a living, for after two years of apprentice work he established a shop of his own, a business which prospered sufficiently to keep him engaged with his burin for twelve and fourteen hours a day. Since the Scotland holiday, however, when he first achieved the fleeting but enticing renown of local print, writing was insistently suggesting itself as a livelihood and life-work.

The four years following his return to London saw much of brilliance to spur on literary aspiration. All of Keats' important work appeared during this period; from Byron erupted *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan* and many of the lesser tales; Shelley's best work came; Moore published *Lalla Rookh* and the *Fudge Family*;

half a dozen of Scott's novels poured from the presses; Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were writing vigorously; *Elia* first appeared; Hazlitt published three of his greatest volumes; De Quincey, Leigh Hunt and a host of lesser writers contributed their shares to an almost unrivalled half-decade of accomplishment. It is small wonder that the youth, writing his more than occasional lyric, his rhymed satirical *Dundee Guide* (lost, but we venture, deserving a high place among such bibliographical derelicts), or his parody of Moore—*Lalla Crow*—felt an inescapable impulsion to renounce scratching on steel for scratching on paper.

When he was twenty-two he came to the turning point of his career. Shortly after his mother's death quirks of fate pitched him headlong into the literary turmoil. From this ferment he never emerged. "A remarkable duel, originating in a pen-and-ink quarrel . . . terminated in the death of Mr. John Scott, the able editor of the *London Magazine*. The melancholy result excited great interest, in which I fully participated, little dreaming that his catastrophe involved any consequences of importance to myself. But on the loss of its conductor the Periodical passed into other hands. The new proprietors were my friends, they sent for me, and after some preliminaries, I was duly installed as a sort of sub-Editor of the *London Magazine*."

In the three years of his connection with the magazine Hood ran the gamut of editorial duties from proof-reading to original contributions. During these years the magazine was at the summit of its high career. It was an imposing group of contributors over which the youth was given blue-pencilled sway; Lamb, Cary (the translator of Dante), Barry Cornwall, Allan Cunningham (the gigantic Scotch ballad writer), Bernard Barton, Hazlitt, Hartley Coleridge, Horace Smith, John Clare (the rural poet), the several Thomases—Carlyle, Talfourd and Wainewright (this last attaining a decade after his slight fame as painter, critic and essayist, a greater infamy as forger and poisoner but whose depravity was yet to be)—these are the names that are scattered through the pages. Here, for samples, during Hood's editorship were first seen in print the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, *Dream Children*, *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig*, *The Life of Schiller*. His own contributions exhibited a wide variety, including such pieces as *Fair Ines*, *Lycus the Centaur* and *Faithless Sally Brown*.

A particularly enjoyable feature of his editorial duty was the series of monthly dinners which the proprietors gave for the editor and the contributors. Wit sparkled at the board. Jest, quip, pun, sally and retort spun round the table. "Alas!" wrote Hood twenty years later, "What a pity it is that so many good things uttered by Poets, and Wits, and Humourists, at chance time—and they are always the best and brightest, like sparks struck out by Pegasus' own hoof, in a curvet amongst the flints—should be daily and hourly lost for want of a recorder! But in this Century of Inventions, when a self-acting drawing-paper has been discovered for copying visible objects, who knows but that a future Niepce, or Daguerre, or Herschel, or Fox Talbot, may find out some sort of Boswellish writing-paper to repeat whatever it hears! Shall we ever meet anywhere again? Alas! some are dead; and the rest dispersed; and the days of *Social* clubs are over and gone, when the Professors and Patrons of Literature assembled round the same steaming bowl, and Johnson, always best out of print, exclaimed, 'Lads! who's for Poonch!'"

Among the contributors to the *London Magazine* and brilliant at the table of the wits was John Hamilton Reynolds. Boon companion of Keats, he became, after Keats' death in 1821, friendly with Hood. The friendship ripened into intimacy; into such intimacy with the Reynolds family that within a year Hood was engaged to Jane Reynolds, the capable, well-read, charming eldest daughter—some five years his senior. In spite of his ill health and pecuniary worries (there seems during the engagement to have been no prospect of financial stability; not even the assurance of sufficient income to provide a domestic competence) the marriage took place in May, 1825.

The severe shrewish aspect of Jane Hood's portrait is belied in every way—by her own words and acts, by the attitudes and comments of those who knew her. Humor, fortitude, tact, patience, generosity, devotion, kindliness—there are a score of gentle qualities in her credit column, with mere negligibilities to subtract from it. Of their life together this description by Mary Balmanno of an evening at the Hoods' is typical. Fanny Kelly (she who Lamb adored) had just finished a comic impersonation. "This little scene for a few moments charmed everybody out of themselves, and gave a new impetus to conversation. Mrs. Hood's eyes sparkled with joy, as she saw the effect it had produced upon her husband, whose pale face, like an illuminated comic mask, shone with fun and good humour. Never was a happier couple than 'the Hoods'; 'mutual reliance and fond faith' seemed to be their motto. Mrs. Hood was a most amiable woman—of excellent manners, and full of sincerity and goodness. She perfectly adored her husband, tending him like a child, whilst he, with unbounded affection, seemed to delight to yield himself to her guidance."

Of Hood's appearance and demeanor there is little record. In young manhood he describes himself as "five feet nine inches high and as thick as a rushlight." Mary Balmanno contributes a later vignette: "In outward appearance Hood conveyed the idea of a clergyman. His figure slight, and invariably dressed in black; his face pallid; the complexion delicate, and features, regular: his countenance bespeaking sympathy by its sweet expression of melancholy and suffering." She speaks also of "his pensive manner and feeble voice." S. C. Hall gives a similar impression: "His countenance had more of melancholy than of mirth; it was calm even to solemnity." Another acquaintance speaks of him as "slow, demure, grave and silent." Little in his presence or habits indicated the jocularity and wit that inspired him.

Just previous to his collaboration with Jane Reynolds, Hood and her brother had collaborated in the *Odes and Addresses to Great People*. The book, published anonymously, was immediately successful. So discerning a critic as Coleridge wrote to Lamb: "My dear Charles, it was certainly written by you, or under you, or *una cum* you. I know none of your frequent visitors capacious and assimilative enough of your converse to have reproduced you so honestly . . . No! Charles, it is *you* . . . Moreover, and besides, to speak with becoming modesty, excepting my own self, who is there but you who could write the musical lines and stanzas that are intermixed?" Lamb replied: "The Odes are 4-5ths done by Hood, a silentish young man you met at Islington one day, an invalid. The rest are Reynolds's, whose sister H. has recently married. I have not had a broken finger in them. They are hearty good-natured things, and I would put my name to 'em chearfully, if I could as honestly."

Three editions were published within a year. Hood, his share in the composition known, had arrived as a humorous versifier. He followed up this initial success the next year with another volume—*Whims and Oddities in Prose and Verse*—the first of the books which, with inimitable grotesquerie, he illustrated himself; and this a year later with a second series bearing the same title. Both were successful and popular. In these two volumes appeared a number of his most characteristic pieces—*Faithless Nelly Gray*, *Tim Turpin*, *Mary's Ghost*, *Death's Ramble* and *The Demon Ship*, to name but a few.

Hood's next venture brought him abruptly face to face with the fact that the reading public regarded him as a funny man, a tickler of risibilities, a facile player with words, a delightful, indispensable joker; and with the rigorous verdict that nothing else from him would be tolerated. His book of serious poëtry, *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* (dedicated to Lamb; and containing as well *Hero and Leander*—dedicated to Coleridge—and a number of shorter pieces) was published in 1827. It was, so far as popular interest and consumption went, a dismal failure. The author, it is recorded, was obliged to buy the edition from the publishers to prevent its sale as wrapping paper for the counter of a butter-merchant.

Hood did not immediately accept the judgment that he must henceforth be a literary Grimaldi. His next venture, however, went even wider of the mark. This, published in the same year, was his two-volume prose work, *National Tales*. A few protesting sentences in the preface indicated his awareness of the public attitude. "The serious character of the generality of these stories, is a deviation from my former attempts, and I have received advice enough, on that account, to make me present them with some misgiving. But because I have jested elsewhere, it does not follow that I am incompetent for gravity, of which any owl is capable; or proof against melancholy, which besets even the ass. A life of mere laughter is like music without its bass; or a picture (conceive it) of vague unmitigated light; whereas the occasional melancholy, like those grand rich glooms of old Rembrandt, produces an incomparable effect and a very grateful relief." These not particularly pertinent but high-sounding protestations were utterly disregarded. The book—his poorest, it must be admitted—was scantily praised, if noticed at all. A century after the book appeared it is amusing to note than an enterprising bookseller, advertising the first edition (surely there have have not been many!) at twenty-five dollars (how Hood would marvel at the price!) slips in the teasing annotation borrowed from Hood's son and the *D. N. B.*: "These stories are somewhat in the manner of Boccaccio." Even this ascription cannot vivify the rather dull dispirited narratives.

A medley of events and work followed. In this same year a daughter was born, only to die at once; he became for a while dramatic critic of a London newspaper; they moved from nearly rural Islington to urban Adelphi; he submitted to occasional caustic reviews and to a severe attack of rheumatic fever; he contributed various bits of verse to periodicals; he collaborated, untraceably, in a few theatrical productions; he wrote ballads to be set to music. His chief activities at this time had to do with literary annuals. In such efflorescences of the *Zeitgeist* as *The The Literary Souvenir*, *Friendship's Offering*, *The Forget-Me-Not*, *The Amulet* and *The Bijou*, he published many poems—*Ruth*, *The Retrospective Review*, *Death in the Kitchen* and others. In the annual which he edited, *The Gem* (in 1829), along with contributions from Scott, Lamb, Proctor, Barton, Hartley Coleridge, Miss Mitford and other friends, appeared some of his own poems—notably *The Dream of Eugene Aram.*

The cobbler finally returned to his last. As a preliminary verbal exercise he produced, in 1829, a sustained comic effort; a lengthy punning narrative in ballad metre called *Epping Hunt.* This Gilpinesque story of the chase was illustrated by Cruikshank. As was always the case with his humorous publications, readers liked it; and, liking, bought.

Obviously common sense—as opposed to poetic sensibility—demanded the continued production of funny and saleable verse. The gravity of the owl and the melancholy of the ass may have salved dignity and artistic conscience, but they buttered little bread. The pragmatic doctrine of Allen Cunningham was belatedly accepted: "that a smile carries a higher market price than a sigh, and that a laugh brings more money than deeper emotion." Hood bowed before the inexorable demand, "doomed to grimace for the national amusement."

"I aimed at higher growth; and now
My leaves are wither'd on the bough,
I'm choked by bitter shrubs."

In 1830 came the *Comic Annual*, the parent volume of a long line. Succeeding issues appeared each year through 1839, and an eleventh volume came out in 1842. Into this series went, for a decade, a large part of his energy.

Superficially it would appear that Hood's life must have become an urbane and agreeable series of jocularities; a serene continuity of mirthful thoughts induced by genial companionship and general well-being; a smooth-running, prosperous decade in which the practised pen had only to record the easily engendered humorous fancies which made a nation chuckle and buy. But true to fictional conventions, behind the harlequin's grinning mask was the expected woeful countenance.

Before the first *Comic Annual* appeared the Hoods had moved from town to the rural Rose Cottage at Winchmore Hill. Here a second daughter, Fanny, was born. Here, too, they were close and frequent-visiting neighbors of their friends, the Lambs. These, for Hood adored his family and affectionately regarded Lamb as his literary father, were joys and partial compensations for quarrels with his publisher, for the competition of imitative volumes, for continued poor health. Within two years they moved to Lake House at Wanstead. Here again unhappinesses were over-fully mixed in their lot. Illness again; the recurring *Annual*, which rode his back "like a centipede spurred on each foot"; another quarrel with and shift in publishers; the death of Lamb; a severe financial set back due to the failure of a publishing house. Through it all the constant manufacture of gayety. Here, too, he wrote and published his novel, *Tylney Hall*, a three-volume medley of puns, quaint characterizations and what-not, which should have sold but failed to.

The early days of 1835 were crucial. In January, Jane gave birth to a son—Tom (very literally to prove a lesser chip off the old block)—and in doing so nearly lost her own life. For a long time her recovery was doubtful; and when it was assured, the gain was heartrendingly difficult and slow. Hood, through his publisher's failure, had meanwhile to face—for one with his income and assets—comparatively huge debts. He disdained the equally legal and dishonorable method of evading his creditors by insolvency proceedings; choosing instead "by redoubled diligence, economizing . . . and leaving every shilling behind him derived from the sale of his effects" to live cheaply abroad, to work incessantly, to recoup his fortunes and to pay his creditors.

In early March, during a violent storm which sent down a dozen other ships in the North Sea, he crossed to Rotterdam; thence into Germany and up the Rhine to Coblentz. Here, a few weeks later, his family came to him; and here, none too happy strangers in a strange land, they lived and worked as they were able. He had hoped that "with my dear ones by my side, my pen will gambol through the Comic like the monkey who had seen the world." In reality misfortunes continued to abound.

Life grew tedious and dreary. His health failed to improve; the climatic severity sapped his energy ("first a long, cold, wet spring; and then, all at once, out of the ice-pail into the frying-pan, like preserved fish"); there was little congenial companionship; the German language and their German acquaintances were equally unamenable; the necessary frequent communication with his publisher was exasperatingly slow and unsatisfactory.

Worried, lonely, homesick, they endured Coblentz two years before moving Britainward to Ostend. Here he commenced the monthly publication of his re-hashing medley of prose, verse, and pictures selected from the *Comic Annuals* with fresh additions—*Hood's Own; or Laughter from Year to Year: being Former Runnings of His Comic Vein, with an Infusion of New Blood for General Circulation.* On his fortieth birthday he wrote to a friend: "I am only able to write at short length, having more work for my pen and less time to do it than ever. I have had a sad nine or ten months of it, almost always ill, and then having to do everything in haste and by night. I think my liver complaint is tolerably cured, and I have not spit any blood for a very long while, but the *curing* has half killed me. I am as thin as a lath and as weak as a plaster. Perhaps I have no blood left to spit. As to my leanness, look at the portrait. Late hours and company do not agree with me yet. Will they ever? God knows. Another year will set me up or knock me down,—the wear and tear of my nerves, etc., cannot last longer. But then I am two score, and am sometimes ready to call them the Forty Thieves, having stolen away all my youth and health. Look at the picture, Tim, I do not look quite so ill as then, but I am as weak as gin-and-water without the gin." In another letter of about the same date he wrote: "I shall never be strong again—Jane got the verdict of our friend Dr. Elliot, that the danger of the case was gone, but that as I had never been particularly strong and sturdy, I must not now expect to be more than a young old gentleman. But I will be a boy as long as I can in mind and spirits."

The final months at miasmatic Ostend were particularly trying. His travel book, *Up the Rhine*, was published and the first edition of 1500 copies sold in a fortnight. Synchronous with this good fortune came the death of the friend who had acted as his agent in London; the discovery that his publisher had been cheating him; a realization that the damp climate was wrecking the remnants of health; and further severe illnesses aggravated by anxiety and mental depression. His publisher's chicanery could be redressed only by a lawsuit. This meant, in turn, the cessation for several months of any sale of his books, and no possibility of obtaining money except from current work—new efforts which he now had little vitality or strength to undertake.

Disheartened, but irrepressibly resolved, he returned to London in the summer of 1840. After a few lonely weeks a moderate accession of funds from the sale of the copyright of *Tylney Hall* enabled him to bring his family over to modest Camberwell lodgings. From the time of his return he was doomed to an invalid's life, though there was neither diminution nor deterioration in his work. He arranged for regular contributions to the *New Monthly Magazine*, then edited by Theodore Hook; and commenced therein the publication of the chief work in which he combined wit and humor—*Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg.*

Writing became laborious and slow. The legal proceedings dragged on. The family came precariously close to destitution. At this juncture the Committee of the Royal Literary Fund, unknown to Hood, voted him a gift of fifty pounds. Courageous, proud to the point of stubborn foolhardiness, he replied: "Sickness is too common to humanity, and poverty too old a companion of my order to justify such an appeal . . . Indeed my position at present is an easy one, compared with that of some eight months ago, when out of heart and out of health, helpless, spiritless, sleepless, childless. I have now a home in my own country, and my little ones sit at my hearth. I smile sometimes, and even laugh. For the same benign Providence that gifted me with the power of amusing others has not denied me the ability of entertaining myself. My embarrassment and bad health are of such standing that I am become as it were seasoned. For the last six years I have engaged in the same struggle without sinking, receiving or requiring any pecuniary assistance whatever. Your kind wishes for my better health—my greatest want—I accept and thank you for with my whole heart; but I must not and cannot retain your money, which at the first safe opportunity will be returned."

A few months later Hook died; Colburn (owner of the *New Monthly*) offered the editorship to Hood; he, rejecting the offered salary of £200 a year, reluctantly accepted the post at the still meagre pittance of £300. Poor Jane Hood's joy—"the prospect of a certainty makes me feel *passing rich*"! The family was now enabled to move to pleasanter lodgings in St. John's wood. Here the new chapter opened auspiciously. His health was a bit improved; regularity of work and remuneration meant lessened anxieties; congenial visitors—Dickens, Mary Lamb and a few others—came to simple dinners—those parties where anyone was liable to die of "unjustifiable comicide"; there were occasional jaunts to see friends in the country; the *New Monthly* seemed prosperously thriving; the *Comic Annual*, made up of contributions to the magazine, was successfully revived.

Lulled into an expansive mood, Hood contemplated a fresh venture. He was firm in the conviction that he deserved a better income than that obtained from Colburn. Dickens, whom he consulted, wrote: "There can be no doubt in the mind of any honourable man, that the circumstances under which you signed your agreement are of the most disgraceful kind in so far as Mr. Colburn is concerned. There can be no doubt that he took a money-lending, bill-broke, Jew-clothes-bagging, Saturday-night-pawnbroking advantage of your temporary situation." Fortified by such vociferous assurance as to the propriety of his move against Colburn, Hood determined to launch his own magazine. Early in December he wrote to his doctor: "Negociations about to close for a new periodical—'Hood's Magazine'—to come out on 1st January!!! N. B.—There are folks with money to back it. I shall have a future share if the thing becomes a property."

It was from the Christmas (1843) issue of the still infant *Punch* that England first sobbed out the cadences of *The Song of the Shirt*. Its popularity was immediate and overwhelming. It pricked the conscience and the heart of a people; its stanzas became the rallying slogan of the poor. It was printed on cotton handkerchiefs and embrined with tears: it was translated into French, German and Italian. *Punch's* historian notes that its appearance trebled the circulation of the magazine. It was equally effective in invigorating at precisely the right moment a new fame and popularity for Hood.

A few days later the first issue of the new venture appeared—*Hood's Monthly Magazine and Comic Miscellany*. Again the outlook was bright. The family had moved from lodgings to a house; a moderate degree of health prevailed; the first issue of the new magazine had the—then remarkable—sale of 1500 copies. But before the month was out the "ill winds that blow with the pertinacity of the monsoon" buffeted him again. Hood, who very obviously had not inherited the business acumen and "gear-gathering" proclivities of his forbears, had entered into a partnership without enquiries concerning the financial standing of his partner. Early in the year John Blackwood, the Edinburgh publisher, wrote to a friend: "I dined on Friday last with Phillips. Thomas Hood was there, a very quiet fellow, evidently in the most miserable health. He is in the most dreadful fix with the man who is associated with him in the unhappy magazine. He has applied to Phillips to arbitrate. P. says the other fellow deluded Hood with the notion that he had money; it turns out that he had only £100, which he has never produced, and grabbed the money received at the office as it came in."

No money was at hand. His desperate struggle to keep the venture going without funds lasted two or three issues longer. In May came another serious breakdown in health, and further efforts were impossible. To save the magazine a friendly contributor installed himself as an unpaid managing editor—with sufficiently persuasive powers to draw contributions from Dickens, Browning and Landor. Even at this almost overwhelmed moment Hood spurred himself to writing one of his best known poems—*The Bridge of Sighs*. The spirit was always willing, no matter how weak the flesh. It was in this year that he wrote (in a hitherto unpublished letter) to Shirley Brooks: "I say at once that I will with pen and purse do all I can. Goodness knows that I my own individual self have suffered enough from illness; and I certainly have not been wholly unacquainted with poverty. However, I believe in the good time coming, and between you and me I do not think it far off."

The anxieties of this final period were partially lessened by the Queen's grant of a pension of £100 per annum to Mrs. Hood for her life. This time the gift was gratefully accepted. A month later he was on his death-bed. Even lingering here his serenity of mind, his unquenchable optimism supplanted despair with a vision of the "good time coming"; for on his death-bed he wrote his last two stanzas:

"Farewell, Life! My senses swim;
And the world is growing dim;
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night,—
Colder, colder, colder still
Upward steals a vapour chill—
Strong the earthy odour grows—
I smell the Mould above the Rose!

Welcome, Life! the spirit strives!

Strength returns, and hope revives;
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn,—
O'er the earth there comes a bloom—
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapour cold—
I smell the Rose above the Mould!"

He died, peacefully asleep, at noon on Saturday, May 3, 1845; and was buried a week later in Kensal Green Cemetery.

Jane Hood, sorrow-stricken, worn with the cares of poverty and constant nursing (she who had "had no time to mend and cobble her own health for soldering up" his) was left with the slight value of her husband's copyrights, her small pension, many debts to erase, and two children to rear. A solicitous group of Hood's friends arranged immediately a public subscription to aid the family. Fame and oblivion, poverty and wealth, joined to give nearly £1400. But the burden was too heavy to be borne; eighteen months later Jane followed her husband. The children were left alone to carry on: Fanny married three years later and wrote many now forgotten books; Tom, too, within a decade was living by his pen.

Before this decade had elapsed England's literary notables were again assembled at Hood's grave. This time they came to do him honor in the erection of a monument purchased through public subscription. The shaft bears the inscription: "He sang The Song of the Shirt." Thus England made official atonement for its earlier insistence on the humorous sally and pernicious pun. To perpetuate the already waning fame Victorian respectability chose the title which would permanently associate with Hood his utmost effort in sobriety and sentiment. Authoritative criticism added its seal of commendation to this choice. Contemporary compensators could conceive no more adequate reparation. Hood the jester was repudiated: Hood the sentimentalist enshrined.

This inept judgment has survived. Now, more than a century since his first work appeared, Hood is little remembered. When recollection of him comes it is as a paradox: a jester whose chief poems are serious and sentimental. Even with the anthologists it is so. The favorite pieces are *The Song of the Shirt*, *The Bridge of Sighs* and the macabre *Dream of Eugene Aram*. The underpaid working girl, the suicidal prostitute, the haunted murderer—these are not representative themes of Hood's. Opposed to these sporadic ventures into sentimentality and horror is the forgotten and much larger body of work which gave him contemporary fame and popularity.

These humorous poems are unique combinations of awkward situation and apt expression. Incongruous and unhappy events are transmuted by the medium of delicately moulded phrase into affairs of uproarious mirth. "What a felicity there is in the happy application of words!" Hood wrote when he was a youth of twenty-two. If this were the sole criterion he spent the remainder of his life felicitously. *Double entendre* was his mistress: through equivoque and homonym he became master of the broad grin.

Throughout the centuries it has been *de rigueur* to affect contempt of the pun. An old saw pairs punsters with pickpockets. Dean Swift, in acrimonious and satirical frame of mind, recorded—perhaps in left-handed self-defence—in his diatribe entitled *God's Revenge against Punning*, "the judgments, which heaven, from time to time, for the chastisement of a sinful people, has inflicted on whole nations." In England the series ran: (1) "that destructive pestilence, whose mortality was so fatal, as to sweep away . . . five millions of Christian souls, beside women and Jews; (2) "that dreadful conflagration in this famous metropolis of London, which consumed . . . one hundred thousand houses, not to mention churches and stables"; (3) the rise of "the abomination of play houses in this land; from hence hath an inundation of obscenity flowed from the court and overspread the kingdom"; (4) "Socinianism, Arianism, and Whistonism."

"And yet still, after all these visitations, it has pleased Heaven to visit us with a contagion more epidemical, and of consequence more fatal: this was foretold to us, first, by that unparalleled eclipse in 1714: secondly, by the dreadful coruscation in the air this present year: and thirdly, by the nine comets seen at once over Soho Square; a contagion that first crept in among the first quality, descended to their footmen, and infused itself into their ladies: I mean the woeful practice of PUNNING."

He goes on to give "some true and dreadful examples of God's revenge against punsters." For punning, the Lord "wryed the nose" of one nobleman: another lost £500 at box and dice and "incurred the heavy displeasure of his aged grandmother." Among lesser men one was made to stutter; one banished to Minorca; two deprived of their reason; one stunted in his stature; one made bankrupt; and a Devonshire man "for only saying in a jesting manner *I get up pun a horse*, instantly fell down, and broke his snuff-box and neck, and lost the horse." Verbicide (the coinage is Oliver Wendell Holmes') is not always so punished or so despised.

Hood's punning is never of the despicable sort. It is more than the mere twisting of the sound of a word so that another is suggested. His *double entendres* are not mechanical; there is nothing wrenched or procrustean. The expression seems inevitable, the most effective way of conveying his idea; yet superimposed on this is the comic second meaning. Either interpretation may be chosen and for either the verse reads logically. From scores of poems hundreds of stanzas might be quoted to show this duplicity of sound and sense. One illustrative series is the last four stanzas of *Faithless Sally Brown*, giving the lament of her forgotten sailor lover:

"O Sally Brown! O Sally Brown!
  How could you serve me so?
I've met with many a breeze before,
  But never such a blow!"

Then, reading on his 'bacco box,
  He heaved a heavy sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
  And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing, "All's well!"
  But could not, though he tried;
His head was turned,—and so he chewed
  His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happened in his berth,
  At forty-odd befel;
They went and told the sexton, and
  The sexton tolled the bell.

Even in the serious poetry one stumbles unsuspectingly on the pun—and frequently passes it by unnoticed—as in these four lines from the *Ode to Melancholy*:

Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust
Like the sweet blossoms of the May
Whose fragrance ends in must.

So the stanzas run. Unbelievable pun succeeds gorgeous *mot.* Henley delared them "the classics of verbal extravagance;" Hood "unsurpassable as a punster." This is a keener and truer evaluation than the sentimental implication of the inscription on his monument. He not only wailed *The Song of the Shirt;* he brought the liberating gift of laughter to thousands. Hood, an almost incredible contradiction in his life—continuously in miserable health, heavy-hearted, oppressed by debt and sharp dealing, burdened with financial care and editorial worry, repressed and thwarted, obligated to write incessantly, never free from anxiety or pain of some sort, smilingly surmounted all the fret and fever to take his rightful place among the great jesters of the world.

FRAGMENTS OF A PLAY*

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

CHARACTERS

NINA, *heroine*
TOM, *hero*
DOLLY, MRS. JOHN DINSMORE
DOLLY'S *daughter*, BERTHA

(*Summary of plot for self*)

Heroine and Hero have been left money by some old curmudgeon, her father's friend, his uncle.

NINA *goes to visit* MRS. DINSMORE, *to get rid of hero's call at her own house.* DOLLY *has no waitress, and* NINA *finds out at the last moment who is coming to dinner (hero); so she plays waitress, as well as governess, that hero may see her in two capacities, and that she may have scene with child.*

Does NINA *live with an aunt? And who has left the will? Is the hero the beloved nephew of the disagreeable aunt?*

SCENE I

(MRS. DINSMORE *discovered under table, dusting its legs. Pause. Extricates herself.*)

Mrs. Dinsmore.—There! I don't suppose I ever had a maid in the house who dusted those table legs. Well, I am stiff and lame; but I feel virtuous! What an enthusiasm for housework you feel when your servants have just departed on a moment's warning. You breathe a sigh of relief and say: "Now I shall sweep under the mats!" Then you plan a simple dinner of bread and milk and fruit, and telephone your husband about it, and he says he will dine at the Club. Later on, after the lonely bread and milk, you remember how well Olga cooked, even if she was impertinent, and—(*Calls*) Bertha!

Bertha (*From outside.*) Yes mama. (MRS. DINSMORE *opens French window. Child comes in, frightfully dirty.*)

Mrs. Dinsmore

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*The following fragments of a projected play, by the late Douglas Wiggin, were found among her papers by her sister and literary executor, Nora Archibald Smith and presented to "Poet Lore" for publication.

FRAGMENT (*Early*)

(*Scene between* MR. *and* MRS. DINSMORE.)

Dolly.—You are perfectly exasperating, John! Why did you never tell me you knew him (hero)? I think men make as much trouble by *holding* their tongues as women do by using them!

John.—Don't be extreme, Dolly!

Dolly.—You know no more of the world than you learned in your geography—that it is round, like a ball or an orange.

FRAGMENT (*Early*)

(SCENE *between* DOLLY *and* NINA.)

Nina.—You know, Dolly, that while Aunt E——is a most conscientious, energetic, reliable, truthful, God-fearing woman, she is at the same time the most disagreeable, ill-tempered, contrary, domineering, autocratic old party in creation.

Dolly.—I dislike to agree with you, Nina, but I fear you are right. (*Story here, Bishop to his daughter's suitor—"People the grace of God can live with, that you couldn't!"*)

Nina.—Thanks for your immoral support. But, oh, dear! I know it's bad form, not to say absolutely vicious, to hate your blood relations!—By the way, is it permitted to lie on sofas in this house?

Dolly.—By all means. Let me take your hat.

Nina.—Oh, no matter about my hat. I'm too distracted and depressed and distraught to think of hats. I should enjoy crushing something, even my own hat. By the way, dear, I was so absorbed in my own woes (the cause of which I haven't told you yet,) that I didn't notice your simple toilette and your galaxy of dusters. What does all this mean?

Dolly.—It means, my child, that, although I look like a galley slave, I am monarch of all I survey: that three of my servants deserted me yesterday, and that I am left alone with my infant. The cook, waitress, and Bertha's nurse departed in a body—three maids with but a single thought, three hearts that beat as one.

Nina.—Oh, dear! What an awkward time for me to come to visit you!

Dolly.—Extremely.

Nina.—But I don't care, Dolly. I shall stay whether you want me or not. I've simply got to stay. When do the new servants come?

Dolly.—Come? Servants do not simply come, Nina, like the leaves on a tree, in a sort of natural evolution. They have to be dug for like gold. (What an inappropriate simile, considering the subject!) If you live in the country, you have to blast the solid rock to find any at all. But why do you want to visit me, especially, to-day?

Nina.—Why, to tell the truth, Nina, I'm running away from a man!

Dolly.—Running away from a man! Why Nina, that isn't like you!

Nina.—Spiteful cat!

FRAGMENT (*Scene of* NINA *with child*, BERTHA. HERO *in adjoining room.*)

Nina.—I'm not your auntie, really, you know. You mustn't call me Auntie while—— is here. Can you remember?

Bertha.—I'll try, Auntie. Can I call you Darling? That won't tell anything, except that you *are* a darling, and he'll know that anyway, the minute he looks at you!

Nina (*Sings Reinecke's "Moon."*) Little girl claps her hands, sits in Nina's lap and makes pictures of it as "we do in school."

Hero (*Listens*).—What an odd thing in nurses or governesses. If I had an infant child, how quickly I'd bribe that girl away from this house.

Hero (*Enters. Tableau*).—Excuse me. Mr. Dinsmore was called away as we came up the drive and Mrs. Dinsmore asked me from an upper window to make myself at home for a quarter of an hour and then she would be down.

Bertha.—Shall I amuse you till Mama comes! (NINA *is sewing or darning, a little apart, having given a stiff bow.*)

Hero.—Certainly, my dear, if you *can.*

Bertha.—Are you hard to amuse?

Hero.—Rather.

Bertha.—Why?

Hero.—Really, I can't tell—not for the life of me!

Bertha.—Haven't you ever been married?

Hero.—No. Is that supposed to be amusing?

Bertha.—I don't know. (*Pause.*) Couldn't you smoke?

Hero.—Yes, I could, but I wouldn't.

Bertha.—Won't your mother let you?

Hero.—I'm afraid *your* mother wouldn't.

Bertha.—If *she* (*pointing to* NINA) liked you, she could amuse you. She tells stories, and she sings, too.

Hero.—The first accomplishment isn't so unusual; but the second is. Who is "*she*"?

Bertha.—Her. (*Nodding towards* NINA)—Mama says Papa is half in love with her.

Hero.—Great Scott! Don't tell family secrets.

Bertha.—It isn't a secret. Everybody knows it. Mama likes to have it so.

Hero.—Then it's all right. Women have such different views on these subjects.

Bertha (*After a pause*).—Shall I show you the baby's picture? He's much prettier than I am, but not so well behaved.

Nina.—Bertha, I'm afraid you're troubling the gentleman.

Bertha.—No, darling, I'm amusing him.

Hero.—She is, I assure you.

Bertha.—I'll run and get the picture. Shall I?

Hero.—Yes, do! (*Sotto voce.*) I hope it's a long way off! (BERTHA *disappears.*) (*Rising and going to table to look at books.* Bertha is a charming child, is she not?

Nina.—Very.

Hero.—Is the baby younger or older than Bertha?—Er, I mean is he much younger—that is,—is he a young baby?

Nina.—Very.

Hero.—I suppose Mr. Dinsmore is quite busy with his literary work?

Nina.—Very.

Hero.—Mrs. Dinsmore must be lonely at times, in this country place?

Nina.—Yes, very. (*Sighs.*)

He (*To himself*).—Great Scott! She must be related to Jonas Very, the Concord poet!

Love-Scene for End of Play

Nina.—Oh, yes; but there's a difference in hearts! There are one-room hearts, cottage hearts, mansion hearts, boarding-house hearts,—mine is a hotel heart! Six stories high, twenty-eight rooms on a floor, all modern improvements. Transients admitted, but preference given to permanent guests. Ground-floor rooms are the choicest. Don't you know, one always says, "I love you from the bottom of my heart!" when one wants to express intense affection?

Hero (*Sighs*).—I never did like living in a hotel.

Nina.—No? Then I wouldn't move. I'd continue keeping house in bachelor apartments, if I were you. It doesn't make any difference to me; I've no rooms to let. I've been "full" for ages!

Hero.—O Nina, I didn't mean what I said. I'd give all I possess for a lodging in that whimsical heart of yours.

Nina.—I didn't mean to tell you, when you were so snippy; but of course you have a room there already,—all my friends have; that's the reason it's so full.

Hero.—*Have* I? Where is it?

Nina.—Fifth floor—(*He shows chagrin.*) sunny side—(*He looks more hopeful.*) convenient to the elevator.

Hero.—But you forget what you said about the ground-floor rooms. Heaven knows, I shouldn't want to go any farther up than the fifth floor!

Nina (*Teasingly*).—No? but an elevator goes both ways!! You—might—like—to come *down*!

Hero.—Oh, true! That's my only hope—to wait for a vacancy. That sounds depressing. Have you any idea—that is, will it probably be—I mean—could you name any time—that is to say—you are *sure* there's nothing vacant on the ground? Forgive me; but you've announced yourself as a landlady, and you're therefore open to persuasion or bribery. Isn't there something, perhaps not quite ready for occupancy, you understand, but that might, in time, you know—

Nina (*As if struck by a happy thought*).—Oh, there is something—something I've never let, because it's unfurnished. I don't know whether it would suit you—it's *very* large!

Hero.—I feel quite capable of filling it, thank you. Just give me a chance!

Nina.—It's very expensive.

Hero.—So is anything precious.

Nina.—I don't know whether I've ever told you, Mr.—— that I like to talk with you exceedingly. You answer me back so nicely,—not quite like anyone else. Now please remember, whatever happens between us, that I did you that justice. Will you?

Hero.—Well, I don't think I'm particularly anxious for *justice;* a little *mercy* would suit me as well as anything. This compliment to my powers of conversation is all very flattering, very pleasant; but business before pleasure. We were talking, my lovely, hardhearted, little landlady, about a certain ground-floor room in your heart. While you are temporizing and uttering pretty sentiments, I am standing out in the cold, my luggage on the sidewalk, and not a roof to my head.

Nina (*Hotly*).—You're doing nothing of the sort. I told you you *had* a room, of a sort, already. Why can't you stay in it, where you belong, contentedly?

Hero (*With temper*).—Because I hate it! Because it's a beastly little uncomfortable, suffocating hole, that a self-respecting man couldn't swing a cat in,—because—

Nina (*Haughtily*).—Excuse me, Mr.——I suggested this line of conversation myself, and I am willing to carry the metaphor to almost any *decent* length; but we are talking about my heart, and I must say I don't see the propriety of swinging cats in it, or insinuating that it contains beastly little holes. I think you've lowered the whole idea with your vulgar similes.

Hero (*Gloomily*).—Well, I've come to the end of my patience; which isn't remarkable, considering that I've known you for—— weeks, during which time you've played with me as a cat—no; I forgot; you don't like cats mentioned—during which time you've played with me like—like anything, and I'm hardly responsible for what I say. Oh, Miss——I take back the cat that I gavest; and if ever I threaten to swing it again, may my right arm cleave to the roof of my mouth! But I will *not* stay another hour in that stived-up fifth floor place assigned to me in what you call your heart. I'll move out.

Nina.—Oh, well! that would be an easy way out of the difficulty, if you feel like embracing it.

Hero.—I'd like to embrace something, if it's only a way out—(and I think it needs only two letters to make *way*, WAYST.) Yes, I've strength and pride enough left to move, I hope.

Nina.—Where will you go?

Hero.—I don't know; it doesn't matter. Perhaps——— would take me in. (*Bitterly.*) She has another of those hotel hearts!

Nina (*Sarcastically*).—Oh, she's sure to *take you in;* but I suppose you know her heart is merely a *summer* hotel?

Hero.—Well, I don't care! I like a change.

Nina.—Oh, you do! "Enough for you that she's a new one." Then (*Mysteriously.*) It's lucky I didn't go into any further particulars about that place on my ground floor.

Hero (*Impetuously, with entire change of manner*).—Oh, do tell me about it! Forgive my wretched temper, darling—I mean my good girl.

Nina.—Well, (*Retiring rapidly towards farther corner, but* *looking over her shoulder and getting behind large table.*) It's the bridal suite.

Hero.—You witch! (*Starts after her.*) And you confess to loving me from the bottom of your heart?

Nina.—Yes; yes; but don't come any nearer; I'm afraid of you! I don't know what you are going to do!

Hero.—*I* do! And forewarned ought to be four-armed. (*Pushes table away, and kneels by her chair, clasping arms around her.*)

Nina (*Looking at him, hesitatingly, blushingly*).—I'm not *four-armed;* but I'm willing to show you I have *two*—if that will do.

Hero.—Darling! Darling! When can I move in? When can I evict all the other tenants?

CURTAIN

PHILIPPINE POETRY

By Hadwen Williams

Philippine poetry in English, such as it is, has at last begun to appear in the periodicals of the Islands. After more than a quarter of a century of American schools the Filipinos have reached the point where they express their poetic impulses in English instead of in dialect. Being a mixture of Spanish and Malay, both of which races are given to impassioned speeches, flowery language, and heartburning serenades, they are now producing a group of young men whose greatest ambition is to see their poems in print. Many of the natives speak three languages—their own dialect, Spanish and English—so that it is not surprising that grammar is neglected and that the reader is often left in the dark, groping to find a shred of meaning in a jumble of words.

All over the Islands, from the Ilocanos in Northern Luzon to the Zamboanguenos in Southern Mindanao there must be many aspiring young poets, if the flood of near-verse that pours into editorial offices in Manila is an indication. Each Sunday, and frequently on week days, the three English dailies devote considerable space to native poetry in English. A few names appear regularly, almost every Sunday, others occasionally, and while title and contributors may vary, the theme is always the same: Love.

Warm airs, tropic skies, wavying palms and dusky maids are all conducive to the grand passion. Cares and worries that beset young men in colder countries are absent in the Archipelago. Love is natural and marriage is not a complicated problem. Should a family result there is no question of money for fuel, and very little as to how they may be clothed, fed, and sheltered, for life is very easy in the tropics. It follows that one may devote much time and attention to the all-absorbing topic of love. A native girl does not investigate the financial standing of a prospective husband. If the young man owns one pongee suit, if he knows how to drape a handkerchief gracefully from a coat pocket, if he has annointed his head with sufficient oil, and if he knows how to put words together so that at first glance they appear to be poetry, he has a good chance of winning the lady's hand. In a land where many of the young people marry before they are twenty, and where parents support most of the newlyweds, one may expect to find love, and more especially marriage, occupying the serious attention of many youngsters in their teens.

Only one Filipino of former times wrote verses that are now considered especially good. Balagtas, in the Tagalog dialect, gave to the Philippines a long love-poem "Florante y Laura" of which an English translation was recently studied in the Manila high schools. Of late it has been the fashion to hold a "balagtasan" (named for Florante's creator), a sort of poetry marathon in which the two competitors are frequently the two most famous living native poets, Collantes and Corazon de Jesus (Heart of Jesus). A topic is submitted by the judges, and the two poets alternate in reciting extemporaneous love-lines before a large and wildly enthusiastic audience. Sometimes there are as many as eight thousand people, whose cheers, whistlings and pounding of the floor are instrumental in influencing the judges in deciding which one is the greater genius. They have a host of imitators, from little boys to married government clerks, who literally burn the midnight oil in an endeavor to produce something that will catch the fancy of the natives. Hence there is the poetry page in all the Sunday papers, dialect as well as English ones.

Consider the poem entitled "Somebody's Sister" by Miss Eusebia Pablo. Not many Filipino women write verses, but when they do, there is apt to be a warning to over-ambitious young men.

SOMEBODY'S SISTER

Do leave her alone,
Betray her not:
For Innocence is sweet
And kindness blest.
Wrong her not,
Thou wouldst know
Of the bitter tears that flow.
Let purity remain;
'Tis a gift divine.
In her heart will enshrined.
Cause no regrets
Be sincere and true;
Remember EVERY GIRL
IS SOMEBODY'S SISTER!

These words, if seriously read, would give pause to the young caballeros who are hypnotized by every pair of dreamy eyes they see. Native girls act as if they were continually on guard; probably they really are. Not many have the courage publicly to shout warnings like this. Pass over Miss Eusebia's erring predicate, for she means well. The Islands would be a different place if the young rakes would follow her advice.

Luis Dato is a frequent and popular contributor of verses. He has a better knowledge of English and the mechanics of poetry than do many others of the Filipino poets. His "Unforgotten," dedicated to "Rosario" shows that he knows enough, at least, to cut his lines to the proper length, and there is generally rhyme where rhyme should be.

I met and then forgot her
With unremembered things,
And thought if love could utter
Once more its murmurings,
Another one and not her
Could pluck the muted strings.

The years have passed long after
That old, old sweet romance,
I thought that love's one daughter
She only could be chance,
For she brought tears and laughter
And sorrow, too, perchance.

I thought the pain and yearning
Had gone away from mind,
And cold the bosom burning
With passion unresigned,
Till I saw her returning
With love and spring behind.

Just what the last two words mean is not clear.

In Mr. Dato's "Awakening" we have another example of a poem that is built according to rules, though it smacks a bit of verses made in another land and is strangely remindful of lines read long ago and far away.

'Tis time this heart indifferent
   To love so long,
Should rise from slumber innocent
   And stroll among
The gardens that are heaven-sent.

The butterflies' unholy quest

From vase to pot
For wine within the petals' nest,
Will guide me not
As it profanely guides the rest.

But it is time this heart so long
Indifferent
For years and years should stroll along
Where Cupid went
One day and listened to his song.

It is curious, after studying hundreds of poems written by natives in English, to find one with so few grammatical errors.

Urbano P. Tabora has written a popular poem entitled "Oh Thou Mother."

Mortal she is, a fellow passenger to grave,
With common folks she loves to yield and to survive,
Unknown to others, with humility she glides,
But endeared most to me she is, the World besides.
Oh Mother, how unselfish thou art to nourish
To herd a flock of thine flesh, lest one should perish,
How sweet it is to trust, beneath thy love I lavish
In profusion of joy, I contend and cherish.
Thou, oh, unwaning pattern of virtue and love!
You boasted adversities for your sons with honors clad,
Your winning love and assiduous care produce Bards,
To animate thy life smug, when Art above.
How often when your sons in adversity be,
When consolation fits not thine daughters for glee,
In their bitterest hours thou console them happy
Else your tears thou shed, if thine efforts faileth thee.
Even handed Justice for discriminations,
The scourger of Injustice and the righter of wrongs,
I wish her life to last, that I may not long
And crave vainly in the multitudinous throng.
Redolent as flowers her outgrowths are to her,
With ecstasy she rests to see them around her,
But inversely, silently remorseful she tears,
When duty calls them OH THE LOVE of MOTHER!

No one who runs may read this with understanding; an easy chair, a grammar and a great ability at guessing are necessary to dig out the hidden meaning. We learn that mother was a good and noble soul even if she did have a "life smug" among her "fellow passengers."

In the following lines of "'Tween that joyous life and me" by Jose M. Malonzo is seen the desire of the ardent lover:

Never fading! never lonesome!
Is my life of hope and glee;
Moments of love and cares entwine,
Are gaps 'tween that joyous life and me.

In that verdant field of infant life,
Were spent my hours of jealousy;
Midst those sparkling waves of light,
Is sweet sap 'tween that joyous life and me.

Glad indeed were the days of yore,
When with me was my blooming Vitty;
But God! those envious angels of lore,
Blunt the charm 'tween that joyous life and me.

Day and night, and deeper and deeper,
My thoughts are absorbed in my fulsome dearie;
LOVE ME DEAR is my only whisper,
For sweetness is 'tween joyous life and me.

One Vitty is the dedicatee of these fiery verses, though if she reads carefully she should discern that she has a rival, for Mr. Malonzo intimates (lines 3 and 4) that moments of love (presumably with another senorita) occupy some of the time that he is not made joyful by the "fulsome" and "blooming" Vitty. What does she think of her lover, who began to be jealous as an infant? Might she think he meant to call her "the sweet sap" (line 8)?

"Imploration," the product of the pen of Matthew Roderick might have been the reason why Miss Pablo wrote "Somebody's Sister."

Come Fely, Oh! come;
Come nearer and cast away thy fear,
Come to me the sinner you have shunned;
With your curses I am living;
Oh! your silence keeps me worrying;
For thy pardon living dying;
Come Fely, and bring me back my cheer.

Oh! for those days I am longing;
Oh! for those days I am pining;
When my love was all above,
But the memories keep me paining,
Sighing, crying bitter tears of love.

Oh! so soon you are departing;
Leave no trace of hatred;
Cast away thy cursing;
Hear this soul who's begging,
Imploring at thy feet prostrated.

Fely, whose real name is Felicidad, should stay away from Matthew who acknowledges that he is a sinner. Surely she must know of his evil ways, for he tells of her cursing him (line 4). With all his pining, longing, paining, sighing, crying and imploring it is not surprising that she should curse twice and prepare to leave him prostrated at her feet.

Matthew Roderick seems to be a favorite, for his verses are often published in the Sunday papers. His "Daisy" shows the high regard in which Filipino women are held, and expresses the native's opinion of men of his own race.

Oh! simple flower of nature's shade,
Dame incarnation of love and health,
Fit symbol of a country maid,
Meet symbol of a humble birth.

You grow away from haunts of men.
You shrink at their betraying touch.
Your artless form, your simple gem,
Protects you from their woeful clutch.

The crimson roses are but fair
As city girls are often false—
But Daisy pure 'neath nature's care
Is true like mothers' loving folds.

Miss Pablo is right, but her "Somebody's Sister" is hardly enough; barbed wire fence and a bull-dog would guard the sister better than verses in a newspaper. As befits a poet in a land where most of the girls are country maids, he lauds them at the expense of the city girls (line 9) who are made to appear almost as despicable as Miss Pablo's men.

"A Maiden's Sighs" are expressed by Elias C. Desembrana in a poem with that title. Instead of talking as a Filipino maiden might be expected to, she speaks the words he would like to hear, with the result that she offers to say "yes" to him if he will only approach her and lay his head on her chaste breast. No mention is made of the omnipresent chaperon in all Spanish-speaking countries, who fastens her eye to a knothole in the sala door, unseen but remembered by the ardent lovers. If the maiden should so far forget herself as to indulge in the petting she sighs for, it is quite probable that she and Elias would be caught by the old mama-san and ignominiously led to the priest before breakfast the next morning. "A Maiden's Sighs" lacks the good moral lesson so much admired by Filipinos in their songs and poems.

The spark of love early bursts into a consuming flame within the Filipino heart, and the young man with a smattering of English well knows that one of the surest ways to find favor in the sight of his lady-love is to tell her with rhyme and meter (*again let us say: such as it is*) in the public columns of the Sunday paper what he would never dare to say under the eagle eye of the old chaperon who, behind the clouds of smoke from her Manila stogie, watches and waits for a pretext to force the young lover into what will be for him the genuine bonds of matrimony.

THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT

By Mody C. Boatright

Cast of Characters

Mrs. Holister
Mrs. Carson
Mrs. Hanson
Mrs. Greer
Mrs. Wilkie
Mrs. Jameson
Doctor Morris
Brother Scroggins
Mrs. Allibone

Time: *The last decade.*
Place: *A small town in the Southwest.*
Scene: *The parlor of* Mrs. Holister.

It is about five o'clock in the afternoon. In the center of the stage is a double widow with lace curtains. To the right of the window is an old-fashioned parlor organ, upon which there are two bright-colored vases containing artificial flowers. Among other bric-brac are sea-shell souvenirs from Galveston. On the walls are several lithographs and a combination match-holder and striker, a souvenir of the Dallas Fair. An oil-lamp with a shade decorated with spangles is suspended from the ceiling. On the center-table is a Bible, a family album, and a stereoptican with views. Balancing the organ is a red plush sofa. There are two chairs to match the sofa. The others have been brought in from the dining room. One is struck by the careful symmetry with which the furniture is arranged.

Mrs. Holister, *hostess of a women's church organization, is seated center. She is a tall thin woman with a high-pitched voice. She does one thing at a time: when she talks, she stops sewing, and when she resumes her sewing, she sews nervously as if attempting to make up for time lost in talking. Grouped about her with their sewing paraphernalia are* Mrs. Carson, Mrs. Hanson, Mrs. Greer, Mrs. Wilkie, *and* Mrs. Allibone. *They are making children's garments. In front of the center-table is an open box from which they take their materials and in which they place the garments as they finish them.*

Mrs. Allibone (*Holding up a small dress which she has just finished hemming*).—Here's one all done but the button-holes. Here Laura, let me hem that one and you make the button-holes in this one. You make 'em better than I do.

Mrs. Holister (*Coming over to make the exchange*).—All right, if you want me to, but I'm sure you can make them as good as I can. (*She returns to her seat.*)

Mrs. Greer.—Of course I would not want her to know it, but the last time we sewed I did over all the button-holes that Sister Scroggins made.

Mrs. Carson.—I wonder why Sister Scroggins didn't come this evening.

Mrs. Greer.—Some people don't take any interest in the church work even if everything they eat and wear does come out of the pockets of the members.

Mrs. Carson.—Sister Henderson never did miss a meeting. She was always there. Even one time when she had the flu, she got up and come.

Mrs. Holister.—Sister Scroggins is kinda sickly. We oughtn't to expect too much of her. She's not as strong as Sister Henderson was.

Mrs. Greer.—I sure did hate to see Brother and Sister Henderson leave.

Mrs. Holister.—Good Christian people, both of them. But Brother Scroggins is a fine preacher. I've heard Truett of Dallas and Gates of San Antonio, but for a good old-fashioned, four-square, gospel message, I'll put Brother Scroggins up against any of them.

Mrs. Allibone.—I like Brother Scroggins too, but I do think he preaches on doctrine a little too much.

Mrs. Hanson.—Yes, and his dry, doctrinal sermons don't interest the young folks much. They don't come to church like they did when Brother Henderson was here.

Mrs. Holister.—More's the pity for them. If there's anything I can't stand, it's for a preacher to cater to the young people. It's not the business of the church to furnish amusement. It's the business of the church to save souls. That's the reason we're making clothes for the orphans—to save their souls. We make clothes for their bodies, but we do it to save their souls. It's an awful thing for a soul to go to hell. But God has revealed his perfect plan of salvation in his holy book, and it's the preacher's business to explain this plan to sinners, and if the young folks won't listen, then they can't blame anybody but themselves on the Day of Judgment.

Mrs. Allibone,—You're right, Laura, you're right. But when a preacher preaches Christ and him crucified, he's done his duty. He needn't keep harping on little points of doctrine that don't make any difference. Repentence of sin and faith in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ—that's what he ought to preach.

(*There is a knock at the door, heard apparently only by* MRS. WILKIE, *who nods in the direction of* MRS. HOLISTER *and then in the direction of the door, but without attracting attention.*

Mrs. Holister (*Positively*).—And baptism. We must be buried with Christ in baptism.

(*There is a second knock.*)

Mrs. Allibone.—I don't know as baptism is *necessary* to salvation.

Mrs. Wilkie.—Somebody's at the door, Mrs. Holister.

Mrs. Holister (*Speaking as she rises to go to the door.*) You don't know it! Why it's fundamental. (*Opening the door.*) Well, well, Mrs. Jameson. I'm so glad to see you. Do come in.

(*Enter* MRS. JAMESON. *Her skirt is somewhat shorter than those of the other women, and in contrast to them, she had bobbed hair.*)

Mrs. Jameson.—Thank you.

(*There is a general bowing and how-do-you-do-ing.*)

Mrs. Wilkie.—I didn't expect to see you here this evening Mrs. Jameson.

Mrs. Jameson.—I'm sorry I didn't get here sooner. John is using the car this afternoon, and I had to wait until he could bring me by. Am I too late to help?

Mrs. Holister.—We're certainly glad to have you. (*Bringing materials from the box.*) Here's a little dress all cut out to make, and here's a night-gown.

Mrs. Jameson.—I'd better take the night-gown. (*She seats herself and begins sewing.*) Have you heard how the children are doing?

Mrs. Allibone.—Brother Scroggins had a wire this morning. One little girl died yesterday. The doctors think all the rest will get well.

Mrs. Holister.–They say that the child that died yesterday was so badly burned that it was really a mercy for God to take her.

Mrs. Wilkie.—That makes six that's dead, and there's twenty in the hospital.

Mrs. Jameson.—Have they learned how the fire started?

Mrs. Carson.—Not a single clue.

Mrs. Greer.—Like as not some Jesuit set it.

Mrs. Wilkie.—Might of.

Mrs. Hanson.—I don't think we ought to blame the Jesuits or anybody else unless we know they are guilty. It's bad enough for the poor children to get burned without making anybody responsible for it.

Mrs. Carson.—Things just happen. Nobody makes them happen, and nobody knows why they happen. They just happen. I had to give up my little girl in the flu epidemic. She was two years old and pretty as a picture. You remember her, don't you, Laura?

Mrs. Holister.—Yes, I remember her. I've had my tribulations too. Nine years ago I laid my husband under the sod. Still, I was never closer to God than since I had my grief. Jesus is just as real to me as Mr. Holister was.

Mrs. Jameson (*Coming to place the garment she has just finished in the box.*)—My stitches are rather long, but I suppose this will keep some child warm at night. Let me make another one. I'll leave the dress to some of you who can sew better than I can.

Mrs. Holister (*Coming to the center and delving into the box.*)—Here's one more. We'll get our box off on the eight-thirty.

(*They return to their places and* Mrs. Holister *continues.*)

No, Sister Carson, things don't just happen. It is that we are too blind to know why they happen. God knows why the fire came. We can't understand his purposes, but he knows. We mustn't think too much about the fire. All the children were under Christian influence, and Brother Scroggins told me particularly that all of them old enough to be accountable were professing Christians and members of the church. So we needn't worry about them. But that shows what a responsibility is on us. If it hadn't been for the orphan's home some of them that burned would have doubtless died as unbaptized sinners and gone to hell.

Mrs. Jameson.—I had never thought of hell's being peopled with children. I can't imagine them going there.

Mrs. Holister.—They will unless they conform to God's plan of salvation—unless they repent, trust Jesus, and be baptized.

Mrs. Allibone.—But, Laura, you don't mean that unless anybody is baptized, they will go to hell regardless of everything else. That's not in our creed.

Mrs. Holister.—Well, it ought to be in our creed anyway. It's in the Bible. Didn't you hear Brother Scroggins last Sunday? It's in the Bible, and I'm not going to give my Bible up. I'm pinning my whole life on the Bible.

Mrs. Wilkie.—Are you sure it's in the Bible? (*Reaching for the Bible.*) Here, let's see what it says.

Mrs. Holister.—Look at the references in the back. (*Taking the Bible.*) Here, I'll find it for you. Here it is, "Baptism." (*She reads rapidly and loudly.*) "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." Here's another place. (*She reads again, her voice becoming higher and higher in pitch as she continues.*) "He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Here's another one. (*She reads.*) "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That's not all, but that ought to be enough. You believe the Bible, don't you? You've got to believe the Bible. Take the Bible away and there's no heaven to meet your loved ones in, no Jesus to walk by and lean on.

Mrs. Carson.—But suppose somebody repented and believed in Christ, but died before they was baptized. Would they go to hell?

Mrs. Holister.—That's the scripture. I believe the scripture.

Mrs. Greer.—Somehow that don't look right to me. Maybe they didn't have a chance to get baptized.

Mrs. Holister.—But God will see that they have a chance. Once when my dear husband was living and we were homesteading on the Plains, we had a protracted meeting in the settlement and twelve people professed religion. Brother Snook wondered how he was going to baptize them unless it was in somebody's stock trough, but they all seemed mighty little and shallow. So he prayed God, and that very night a big rain came and filled up all the lakes on the prairie, and the next day all the converts were baptized. I'll tell you, sisters, if anyone wants salvation, the Lord will make a way.

Mrs. Hanson.—But just suppose somebody really wanted to be baptized and didn't have a chance?

Mrs. Holister.—I believe they will always have a chance. But if they don't we know that God is just. He knows best. His ways are not our ways. He have his word. That's all we have.

Mrs. Carson.—I lost my little girl with the flu when she was two years old, and I know she ain't in hell. I *know* she ain't.

Mrs. Holister.—No, no, of course not. She hadn't reached the age of accountability.

Mrs. Wilkie.—Sometimes I think we ought to baptize our babies, not sprinkle them of course.

Mrs. Holister.—That wouldn't do any good. One has to be at the age of accountability and want salvation before baptism does any good. But if he reaches the age of accountability and dies before he is baptized, then he is lost. That's the plan that God in his wisdom has established. We have no right to question God.

Mrs. Carson.—When does anybody reach the age of accountability?

Mrs. Holister.—Oh, that's hard to say. Some people probably reach it before others do. Now there's my boy Arthur. He's eleven. He's reached it. He said to me the other day, "Mother, don't you think I ought to join the church?" And I said, "Son, have you repented of your sins?" And he said, "Yes, mother." And I said, "Have you trusted in Jesus as your personal saviour?" And he said he had, and next Sunday he's going to be baptized into the church.

Mrs. Jameson (*She has obviously been bored by the fore-going discussion. She rises and looks out the window, then begins putting away her sewing.*) I believe that's my husband coming for me.

Mrs. Holister.—I hope you don't have to go. We're going to have refreshments.

Mrs. Jameson.—Thank you. But we have about made up our materials, and if that is John, I think I shall go with him. It isn't he, however. I see now that it's not our car.

(*By this time an automobile has stopped at the front of the house.* Mrs. Holister *can tell by the expression on* Mrs. Jameson's *face that something is wrong. She goes to the door.*)

Mrs. Holister.—It's Arthur! They're taking him out of the car! (*Rushing out.*) His head is bandaged!

(*All the women follow her out in confusion, leaving the stage empty. A loud shriek, followed by wails and sobs, issues from the adjoining room.*)

(*After an interval, enter* MRS. JAMESON, *followed by* DR. MORRIS, *a typical small-town practitioner, and the other women except* MRS. HOLISTER.)

Mrs. Jameson.—Better leave her to herself until the first shock is over. There's no hope, Doctor?

Dr. Morris.—Killed instantly.

Mrs. Greer.—And how did it happen, Doctor?

Dr. Morris.—Pony threw him in front of a speeding truck. Skull crushed. She takes in hard. She seemed braver when her husband died.

Mrs. Jameson.—Yes.

Dr. Morris.—You'd better stay with her. If she doesn't quiet down after a while, send for me. (*He goes.*)

(*The other women, eager to spread the news, prepare to leave.*)

Mrs. Carson.—Let me know if I can help.

Mrs. Hanson.—Me too: I'll be *glad* to do anything I can. (*She and* MRS. CARSON *leave.*)

Mrs. Greer (*Following them.*)—Let me know if there's anything I can do.

Mrs. Wilkie.—Let me know if you need anything.

Mrs. Allibone.—I'll come back and relieve you after a while. (*She and* MRS. WILKIE *go out.*)

(*The wailing and skrieking have been going on in the adjoining room. They continue. Occasionally the words "Arthur" and "God" can be heard.* MRS. JAMESON *sits for a moment, then in response to a knock, goes to the door.*)

(*Enter* BROTHER SCROGGINS. *He is a tall hatchet-faced man; his mouth turns down at the corners. He is a man of decided convictions, and he would be burned at stake for them.*)

Brother Scroggins (*In his positive, professional voice*).—Good evening, Sister Jameson.

Mrs. Jameson.—She's in hysterics, Brother Scroggins. Offer her comfort if you can.

Brother Scroggins.—The will of God must prevail. She must submit herself to the will of God.

Mrs. Jameson.—You are the one person who can offer her comfort. Give her hope for her child. Tell her he's not lost. Surely the God you worship would not send a child to hell on a mere technicality.

Brother Scroggins.—I shall offer her the hope offered by the scriptures. To do more would be to betray my trust as a servant of God and to utter a lie of the blackest sort.

Mrs. Jameson.—Will you allow her to persist in her belief that her child is lost?

Brother Scroggins.—I cannot modify God's plan of salvation. We cannot see the wisdom of God's ways. Who are you, who am I, to question his justice? (*Brightening.*) God may have made an example of the boy, whereby he will bring dozens of young people into the fold. God has his purposes which are inscrutable to our feeble human intelligence. We must learn the lesson of submission.

Mrs. Jameson (*Placing herself in the door.*)—Then you shall not see her.

Brother Scroggins.—You have no right to detain me. Woe unto them who hinder the servants of God in the discharge of their duty. (*He forces her away and goes in to* MRS. HOLISTER.)

(MRS. JAMESON *seats herself. The shrieks and wails of* MRS. HOLISTER *continue to be audible. Between shrieks, the sermon-like tones of the minister can be heard, but his words are indistinguishable. This continues for an interval, after which, enter* MRS. HOLISTER, *followed by the minister. Her hair is disheveled, her sleeves torn, and her eyes red and wild.*)

Mrs. Holister (*Walking mechanically up and down, swinging her arms*).—Arthur . . . Hell . . . Burn forever . . . Baptism . . . God . . . Justice . . . Worms. . . Ha, ha, ha . . . (*She bursts into a wild, insane laugh as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE FIRST BLACK WORLD POET

By Thomas Millard Henry

In a recent article to the New York Times magazine Mr. Bertrand Russell mentioned poetry's stubborn affinity for the old. His statement on this matter caused me to reflect on Walt Whitman, who felt boldly, though somewhat blindly. into the womb of time for new poetic imagery to correspond with what he regarded as the new spirit and new statesmanship of a new nation. So far as the history of poetics is concerned Whitman has now convinced us that he was no mean prophet. In spite of the excesses practiced by the too optimistic army of scribes who wish to discard the heritage of versification, bell, book and candle; in spite of our capitalized corporations who have been well paid for flooding the literary market with the turgescent, acerose and hectic, new poetry, the maze is beginning to clear. Poetry is surviving the product of the optimists that has been, as Dr. Glen Frank has said, "inspired by nothing worthier than a flight from facts." Out of the apostasy that marked the transition from the colonial style, American poetry has evinced a firm renaissance.

The wise men who come west to announce the caliber of poets have now pronounced Paul Laurence Dunbar the foremost wit among singers since the demise of Walt Whitman. Our past masters from Europe have in previous instances been heard amid a display of horns, and joyful acclamation. In the last instance, however, these glad tidings fell on deaf ears and a sequence of pathetic silence. This different behaviour in America after Paul Laurence Dunbar's ascendency results not from racial aversions entirely. Beautiful sentiments in that introduction by William Dean Howells to a volume of Dunbar's poems support this conclusion.

It appears, nevertheless, that the impression of this critic, that this poet's dialect poems surpassed his literary attempts in verse, developed a peculiar situation. It is quite likely that Howells had not read Dunbar's best literary poems at that time. It is evident that if he had read them, before writing the introduction, his opinions could not have created such confusion.

Proud sensitive Negroes of New England with a different mental complex from their brethren further south believed that Dunbar's jocosity should not be allowed to reflect on their Yankee superiority. Lily White enthusiasts have strengthened their dogmas on the black man's inferiority because Howells had found in a black man's poetry what seemed to them proof that the Negroes highest mental range was darker and smaller than that of other race groups. This Dunbar incarnation, consequently, swept away the impressions, that had been made by Toussaint, Ira Aldridge and Alexander Crummell. Hearing these speculations caused even the Negroes to become crestfallen. Neither The Crisis, nor Opportunity magazines have published sentiments that show any enthusiasm for the immanence of Dunbar. It is significant to find a strong editorial in the New York Amsterdam News on the theme of race pride being dead. Dunbar has come to his own, and they received him not. Also the statement in the New International Encyclopedia shows that high up in some white circles Dunbar's poetry is stigmatized.

Since such conditions obtain it seems worth-while to investigate the poetic bent in American poetry and its relation to the poetry of the world in general. Poetry, constituting a unity in diversity, has reached in the United States an easily defined tendency. If we may borrow the terms from statesmen of "right and left wings" we shall call the lyrists, Shelley, Keats, Swinburne and Poe, left wing poets, the leaders of the American school of poetry. Poets like Thomas Moore, Byron and Shakespeare and the Brownings, including Holmes and Lowell, belong to the right wing of poetry, the school in which Dunbar belongs. The left wing verse is not versatile enough to bear all of the moods, the wit and the imagery of right wing poetry. There is not enough epigramatic expression in the list of left wing poets to influence a single public speaker's address. There's not enough humor in all of them combined to invoke laughter, and their imagery is not sufficiently definite to attract attention. It is amateurish like the hearts of unfledged youth. Thus, it is clear that by virtue of their literary standards they are blind to Dunbar's greater gifts.

Mr. Stedman, immanent as a critic, leader and literary essayist, did not hesitate to allege Paul Laurence Dunbar's ascendency. He so quoted from Dunbar in his essays that any one of average intelligence might catch the epic ring and the witty turn of mind that made the black writer unique. Consequently, Dunbar, to Mr. Stedman's mind was a poet of the right wing. IONE is more of an epic than any poem that Longfellow has ever written because it rises above lyric amateurishness. If Dunbar's name was omitted from this tale the reader would be reminded, as he follows its bold magic, of the greatest poets of the earth. Therefore any one who reads the American edition of the thesaurus cannot escape chagrin when he learns that, while Dunbar is entirely avoided in the quotations, more recent poets of far smaller fame are included. Why such perfidy respecting the genius who wrote: ON A STARRY NIGHT, DAWN, LIFE, PARTED, RETORT, THE DEBT, THE PATH, THE BOHEMIAN, TO A CAPTIOUS CRITIC, ON A CLEAN BOOK, LOVE DESPOILED, COMPARISON, RAIN-SONG, CONSCIENCE AND REMORSE, and THEOLOGY?

In RAIN-SONG the stage is set to represent a creation of his imagination where a great harp, a great polychord, is set up in mid-air. One end of each string is pinned on clouds, the other is pinned to the earth. The wind appears as a giant harpist singing in decrescendos while his deft fingers tempt sweet harmony from the liquid strings.

RAIN-SONG

"The rain streams down like harp-strings from the sky;
The wind, that world-old harpist, sitteth by;
And ever as he sings his low refrain,
He plays upon the harp-strings of the rain."

Now DAWN is his theme. It is again a depicted drama. Two nationalities seem to be present, and one is showing great love for another. While one benighted party sleeps he is aroused by the kiss of his neighbor in white raiment. The blush of the slumberer attracted the attention of men who called the affair dawn.

DAWN

"An angel robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping Night,
Night woke to blush; the spright was gone.
Men saw the blush and called it Dawn."

A noise is now shocking the habitations of the firmaments. A cloud has fallen and crashed on the brow of a mountain. The etherial hosts whom the poet styles—moon and stars, rush to an azure opening, to learn the fate of things on earth. He names this dramatic suggestion, A STARRY NIGHT.

A STARRY NIGHT

"A cloud fell down from heaven,
And broke on the mountain's brow;
It scattered the dusky fragments
All over the vale below.

"The moon and the stars were anxious
To know what the fate might be;
So they rushed to the azure op'ning,
And all peered down to see."

In other poems he makes equally striking life-ideas from psychology, *head*, *heart*, *conscience*, *remorse*, *Time*, and *Cupid* selling his arrows for gold.

The belief that there has not been such a powerful poet found writing in English since the time of Walt Whitman came not as the fitful opinion of a single authority, but it has been reechoed by eminent critics from time to time ever since the day when Dodd, Mead & Company first published Dunbar's complete poetical works. Instead of this poet's leadership indicating how low our poetical standard has been as many leaders of our new hectic efforts would have us believe, many lecturers from abroad have declared him to be one of the best of America's poets. Besides they have made it quite clear that his best works were not his dialect. His long and short poems in literary English have in every instance been their selections for such praise.

The outstanding catholic principles, by which the greatness of a poet's work is arrived at, are expressed in three cardinal gifts. The gift for good imagery, the gift for good epigram, and the gift for making a great synthesis. The authority for the last of these rules is Beneditto Croce. He has been generally accepted as the greatest mind among literary critics since Aristotle. The two other rules, mentioned, have been the property of criticism since the days of Chaucer in the English tongue. I wonder who could be so bold as to start a new poetry and base its excellence upon an entirely new set of rules after they have learned the catholic rules on which literary criticism rests. New writers now have such a task before them.

In the days of Blyden, and of Ben Johnson, good poetic imagery was as needful a countersign to a writer's recognition to the Elysian choir as is the hectic flushes for the scribes of the day. Noah Webster defines imagery as being the sensuous pictures or descriptions, presenting or suggesting images of sensible objects or phenomena. The keen eye for such figures seldom stamps the aspirant for the critic's office in these days. A whole army of men are laboring in the field of poetic criticism now, but not since Mr. Stedman made his contribution to that field do we find a writer with a catholic conception and the disinterested attitude. Mr. Thomas Kennedy, when writing for the Writer's Digest a few months ago, had to scrape the whole poetic monument to find a few commendable nature poems, but he was unable to refer to Dunbar. On the other hand, America's left wing leader, Edgar Allen Poe, held no brief for Longfellow, but boldly praised the imagery found in his poem THE DAY IS DONE.

In pointing out some good imagery in these poems of Dunbar's, one should keep in mind not merely its beauty, but its pioneering spirit as well. This poet had a faculty for finding tropes that dovetailed with the industrial life of his day. He was not the poet of thesauruses, or riming lexicons, but of the market-place. Evidence of this is found in a couplet from A WINTER'S DAY:

> "The earth is folded in an *ermine* sleep
> That mocks the melting mirth of myriad Mays."

A little knowledge of the fur business led him to liken the snowbound day to ermine. The metaphor is so apt it keeps turning over in one's mind for days, weeks, months, afterward.

In the poem entitled HOW SHALL I WOO THEE, another kind of figure is employed. The above figure was expansive imagery, and the following is more intensive:

> "The path from the meadows that lead to the bars
> Are more to me now than the path to the stars."

At a glance the reader finds himself admiring the unpremeditated raciness of this couplet. In the back of your mind you see a young man at that fork of the amorous road that is eternally making or smashing careers.

His trilogy, LAPSE, is a congeries of side-shaking drollery. The "copy" must be prepared for his editor. It is necessary to stay in the den and work when the urge is pressing him to go fishing, or to go hunting and galavanting. These circumstances, bring to his poem this consummate stroke of the pen:

> "The air is a poppy."

Like the trope *ermine* this term *poppy* is dynamic, and exhibits the poet's aptness for keeping poetry on the frontier of vital forces. The poppy's present commercial value needs no explanation.

There is a last line in his poem, LIFE, also, that hinges upon industrial experience. It is this poem that begins with: "A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in." Its last line contains the invented trope:

> "And a moan is the finest of *foils* for laughter."

So he uses the jeweler's term *foil.* An understanding of *foil* as a setting for precious stones helps, indispensibly, toward artistic appreciation.

In LOVE'S DRAFT the aftermath of the amorous flame is ingeniously expressed in the simple little word *ash:*

> "It will consume me through and through,
> And leaves but *ash*—a name."

The strong religious feeling of the American Negroes was not neglected in Dunbar's singing. It is an established opinion that a strong religious feeling becomes very effective in the hands of a writer. No great literature is possible without strong religious feeling. It has throughout the ages been the essence to the world's grandest dramas. Although he enjoyed great freedom of thought, Dunbar thoroughly appreciated the religious element in life. Hymns, prayers, and thanksgiving were regarded in no unhallowed spirit when Dunbar employed them. His hymn that begins with the line, "Lead gently, Lord, and slow," is considered a rare contribution to hymnology by some of the brightest churchmen. His religious wit often ripens into piercing eloquence or epigram. Two stanzas from RIGHT'S SECURITY will show his capacity in this mode of expression:

> "Right arms and armors, too, that man
> That will not compromise with wrong;
> Though single, he must front the throng,
> And wage the battle hard and long.
>
> Minorities, since time began,
> Have shown the better side of man

And often in the lists of time
One man has made a cause sublime."

Dunbar's dialect has been styled as guffaw. But, who will deny that this guffaw was serviceable and fitting. It has proved to be a powerful stimulant for the unlettered masses. Negro church folk, whose libraries usually were completed with a Bible, a hymn-book, and the school books of their children, eagerly added Dunbar's poems. They could enjoy and appreciate guffaw. Guffaw was sweet to them, and it has kept them sweet. One of the greatest things you can do for the man who has to drudge is to keep him sweet. How few poets have had the gift to reach the lowly. If you can stir them you can move mountains. Many churches among Negroes are serving the two-fold mission of church and show house, and the artist in great demand is he who can read effectively these drolleries.

Dunbar was not a college man. Everybody is not suited for college training. Sometimes college training has impaired a student for doing his best service. Some of nature's giants would be ruined if their temperamental souls were overshadowed by college walls, or if they were forced to go at a pace that did not agree with their mental constitutions. But, some say that even Dunbar should have gone to a university, and insist on ignoring his more than university ability. Quite significant on this score is that stanza in BY THE STREAM:

"I deem the stream an emblem fit of human life may go,
I find a mind may sparkle much and yet but shallows show,
And a soul may glow with myriad lights and wondrous mysteries,
When it only lies a dormant thing and mirrors what it sees."

The talk that Dunbar did not soar aloft is a hoax. Writers who laughed at Dunbar, rather than with him, respecting his dialect drollery, shall find the shoe on the other foot when they read his formidable retorts. Not the least of them is entitled TO A CAPTIOUS CRITIC. One of his serious contemporaries had been deploring his poetic lightness. This retort pictured Dunbar wishing that he might be weightier so that he could be useful in the realm of Boredom. He declares that he would be glad to be the ruler of such a dull estate as soon as the critic steps down from the throne.

"Dear Critic who my lightness so deplores,
Would I might study to be prince of bores,

Right wisely would I rule that dull estate—
But, sir, I may not, will you abdicate."

His quips and cranks don't spare some of the hoaxes that sometimes creep into the pastor's sermon. Here is his quatrian entitled:

THEOLOGY

"There is a heaven, for ever, day by day,
The upward longing of my soul doth tell me so,
There is a hell, I'm quite as sure; for pray,
If there were not, where would my neighbors go?"

And again in the poem selected and quoted by Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman:

RETORT

"'Thou art a fool,' said my head to my heart,
'Indeed, the greatest of fools thou art,
To be lead astray by the tricks of a tress,
By a smiling face or a ribbon smart;'
And my heart was in sore distress.

Then Phyllis came by, and her face was fair,
The light gleamed soft on her raven hair;
And her lips were blooming a rosy red,
Then my heart spoke out with a right bold air:
'Thou art worse than a fool, O head!'"

Is not it interesting that he is the author of the following aphorism:

"Men court not death
When there are sweets still left in life to taste."

So many writers have acknowledged his lyrical gifts that I shall omit selections from them in the interest of greater elements of his unique powers. The imagery and epigrams which I have quoted mean more to poetics than any lyrical work could mean however excellent. It is because he has done in addition to rare lyrics the very masterful strokes of imagery, epigrams, quips and cranks, and devastating retort flashing like lightning to confound the critics when they tried to shoot him down, as they did John Keats, he is the world poet. Fancy this incarnation of Africa's genius that in its youth is so indomitable that his literary Hectors fall before him like Hector in the Trojan war who, being smote by Achilles, dropped in armor that crashed like a large tree when felled by the ax of the woodsman. Civilized men will never become too developed to need poets. The poets are needed to stir the imagination of the populace. Reconstructed imagination is the shortest road to world betterment.

Poets are like trees. Some trees show nothing worth while, nothing but leaves. Other trees bear good fruit also. A tree must bear fruit, and a poet ought to be a seer who can show us things that we cannot see for ourselves. He must reveal, create, unravel something. Dunbar showed us how the air could be like a poppy, how the moan could be like a foil for laughter, how a snow-storming day could be like a sleeping ermine, a man's name like ash, and a starry night like a cloud that fell breaking over the brow of a mountain.

In 1885, a great man spoke at Faneuil Hall, Boston. Negroes had charge of that hall on that occasion, and he was their guest. He was known and loved in America by the most prominent white citizens for his ability and solid character. His name was John Boyle O'Rielly. In this particular address he stressed among other things that the coming of a Negro poet would be of the greatest importance to colored people. At that time Dunbar was a mere boy, yonder in Ohio. Nobody in America would have believed that a small, black, ragged lad of thirteen, whose parents were obscure and unlettered, could amount to much. Just twenty years afterwards he (Dunbar) lay stretched on his death bed, and not a race, but humanity was being deprived of one of the brightest souls that has ever set foot on the western Hemisphere. Mr. O'Rielly had said in Faneuil Hall that a poet is worth ten presidents. Dunbar was called by a magazine writer of Central Europe, not long ago, the greatest poet America has produced in at least fifty years.

What kind of picture did Shakespeare present, or Homer, or Omar, or the Book of Job? Shakespeare painted in the lower classes—coxcombs, wenches and idiots; in the upper class he painted Shylocks, Lady Macbeths, Portias, Hamlets, Romeos and Juliets. Homer, like Shakespeare, showed envy, murder, humor and pity. Omar showed gusto, ecstacy, woman and wine. The Book of Job shows faith in the benign Providence in the midst of discouragement and affliction. Now, if any may lift your soul and conscience up so that you can overlook clay tints you will find Dunbar a genius with measureless humor, rugged wit, boundless ecstacy, sympathy and love for the humblest of folk, now singing his WELTZSCHMERTZ, COLUM-

BIAN ODE, and HARRIET BEECHER STOWE; now laughing, loving, jesting, and dancing; now watching DAWN or A STARRY NIGHT.

WELTZSCHMERTZ is an abstract word of relationship. Dunbar extracted this word from the German tongue because it plunges the student's mind into the world of magnanimous spirits. An English translation of this foreign word is worldpain, which is very inadequate; for it represents a care and sympathy, like that of the mother towards her children, expanded until it includes all of the children of this earth. Such ideas do not lend themselves to the technique of second rate poets. With good and sincere imagery Dunbar ran the gamut of this subject. Let any one link up these poems to which I have alluded, (*and many links had to be omitted*) and he will be struck with the mighty epic sweep of this bard who was a native of a nation that after twenty years since his death is just beginning to understand him. It is no wonder that he could sing:

> "I greet the dawn, and not the setting sun,
> When all is done."

But what is wonderful is the great laughter of the gods who are laughing over the world again because Dunbar sang to his lyre in America.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

From far and near come tidings of delight—
Each wind blows home a new wreath for his sake—
(The wreathes that nations from their myrtles break)
For him who found the new Elysian height.
What modern harp made metaphors so bright
Or with such warm unerring judgment spake,
Or into lines such sapient tropes did take?
No modern muse quite promised such a flight.
His baton was no opportunists' tool.
Said he, "Let others beat the coxcomb's brass."
And thin walls save the author from the fool
Who meets the wolf; but Dunbar spurned the crass
By faith in things that over matter rule,
And reached the very rare immortal class.

By Thomas Millard Henry.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MUSICIAN

(Discovered in a moving picture theatre)

BY JOSEPH UPPER

I

Your shining fingers dance upon the strings
  Like slender, naked fauns at pagan play.
  Your roving eyes are curious and gay,
Tuned to the songs your Stradivarius sings.
My thought with colorful, romantic things
  Is filling the abysmal, rain-swept day,
  Transmuting sour November into May,
And lending leaden sorrow joyful wings.

Your music and your beauty have entwined
  Themselves about my heart's cold sepulchre
  Until I think new life begins to stir
In my old corpse, and wondrously my blind
  Eyes open on a land where pleasure lingers,
  The happy captive of your dancing fingers.

II

I sense a subtle magic luring me
  Back to this dingy place—ignobly flanked
By mart and hovel—which your wizardry
  Changes into a dwelling sacrosanct,
Where I may dream a secret hour away
  Watching your moving fingers and your eyes
That sometimes seem to dance, sometimes to pray,
  But always thrill me with a sweet surprise
That one grown old and bitter still can feel
  With tightened throat the sudden clutch of pain,
Or from the dross of disillusion steal
  Romantic moods of mystery again,
Until my heart, like this transfigured place,
Knows the reflected beauty of your face.

III

I shall not ever seek to know your name,
  Nor how you spend your days nor where you dwell,
  Lest knowledge of these things destroy the spell
Your beauty weaves, or spoil the harmless game
My fancy plays whenever in this same
  Dark place I watch you drawing from the well
  Of music liquid harmonies that swell
Like slender rockets bursting into flame.

But often I shall come to watch you here,
  Unknown, unknowing, happy just to see
  Your shining fingers moving rhythmically
Upon the strings. A smile, sometimes a tear,
  Shall be my tribute to your conjurer's might
  Before I disappear into the night.

IV

So you are gone: and now this narrow place
  Is no less old and empty than my heart.
No more in contemplation of your face
  Shall I know suddenly the welcome smart
Of tears again, nor in gray days discover
  Caressing echoes of your repertoire
In my old brain. Like some despairing lover,
  Slowly I rise and go and close the door
Of this dark edifice, untenanted
  By beauty now, and wander through the gloom
Of aging thought that never should have bred
  Young dreams, nor given folly elbow room.
May power and honor follow, where you go,
Your dancing fingers and your gliding bow.

V

The paling stars fade in the morning sky
  Like doubtful dreams dissolving into sleep.
  Across the glimmering horizon creep
Night's lonely exiles—hopes condemned to die
In the long desert days where bleaching lie

  The skeletons of hours that could not keep
  Their moonlit promise. Where they fell, the sweep
Of the wind-driven sand goes drifting by.

We meet no more, who have not ever met,
  And ended is this little interlude
  Your youth has played in my old solitude;
But I remain forever in your debt.
  We have not met, and now perforce we part,
  But I've your beauty hidden in my heart.

ARABIAN NIGHT

By Paul J. Ketrick

Far from the lights, the murmurs, and the wine
I say again I love you, Dil Aram.
You have the freshness of the vine that looms
And bursts each year its crimson loveliness,
Ever renewed; the fragrance of cool wine
Treasuring long the summer's essence up:
No joy on earth more exquisite than this,
To have and still to love, O Little One.
And what is this you say? "O Lover Mine,
Though I be happy now, yet I must go."

You must go? Whither then, my lone white dove,
The ways afar are bitter and unworn.
You thrust a rose-thorn deep into my breast,
You wake a windstorm in my heated brain,
And terror's brazen chains have bound my heart.
'Tis true the moon that crowned our night of love
Grows lean and withers on the morning air:
Let us no longer watch. O sleep, and thus
May Allah bind through many weeks of years
Your little hand in mine, O Dil Aram.

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OLDEST AND LARGEST REVIEW IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAG

EVOTED TO POETRY AND DRAMA

Poet Lore

World Literature & the Drama

Autumn Number

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By Alexander Ostrovsky

The Nightcap of the Prophet Elias, A Farce in One Act

By August Von Kotzebue

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By Clifford M. Montague

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(Complete Contents on Inside Cover)

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AUTUMN, 1929

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A CAT HAS NOT ALWAYS CARNIVAL

Scenes from Moscow Life

By Alexander Ostrovsky

Translated by Jane Paxton Campbell and George Rapall Noyes

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky (1823-86) is the great Russian dramatist of the central decades of the nineteenth century, of the years when the realistic school was all-powerful in Russian literature, of the period when Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy created a literature of prose fiction that has had no superior in the world's history. His work in the drama takes its place beside theirs in the novel. Obviously inferior as it is in certain ways, it yet sheds light on an important side of Russian life that they neglected. None of these masters more than touched the Russian merchants, that homespun moneyed class, crude and coarse, grasping and mean, without the idealism of their educated neighbors in the cities or the homely charm of the peasants from whom they themselves sprang, yet gifted with a rough force and determination not often found among the cultivated aristocracy. This was the field that Ostrovsky made peculiarly his own. *A Cat Has Not Always Carnival* (1871) is an example of his pictures of the seamy side of Moscow merchant life.

Several plays by Ostrovsky have already appeared in *Poet Lore*: *At the Jolly Spot* (vol. xxxvi, no. 1), *Bondwomen* (vol. xxxvi, no. 4), *Wolves and Sheep* (vol. xxxvii, no. 2), *A Last Sacrifice* (vol. xxxix, no. 3), *Fairy Gold* (vol xl, no. 1).

Cast of Characters

Dárya Fedósevna Kruglov, *a merchant's widow, forty years old*
Agnia, *her daughter, twenty years old*
Ermíl Zótych Akhov, *a rich merchant, sixty years old*
Ippolít, *his clerk, twenty-seven years old*
Malánya, Darya Fedosevna's *cook*
Feóna, Akhov's *housekeeper and distant relative*

ACT I

KRUGLOV

A poor but tidy room. In the background, a door into the entrance hall. To the left of the audience, a door into the inner rooms. On the same side, nearer the audience, a couch; before the couch, a table spread with a colored cloth; two chairs. On the right side, two windows with clean white curtains; in the windows, flowers; between the windows, a mirror; nearer the audience, an embroidery frame.

SCENE I

DARYA FEDOSEVNA *is on the couch;* AGNIA *is standing at the window nibbling cedar nuts.*

Agnia.—Such weather! It's just glorious! And here we are just sitting still! I tell you what—if only we could go walking somewhere!

Darya Fedosevna.—Here, hold on now! Just you wait a bit till I take forty winks and then we can go walking if you like!

Agnia.—One after another of my beaux has gone and given me the slip and now I haven't got anybody to go walking with!

Darya Fedosevna.—And pray, whose fault is that? It's not my lookout to catch your beaux for you! You don't think that I'm going to spread nets in the street, do you?

Agnia.—Perhaps Ippolit will drop in here!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why, I shouldn't be surprised if he did! Today's a holiday, and what's there for him to do around home? There's a beau for you! I didn't have to look for him; you caught him yourself—my sly little puss! How did you manage to get hold of him?

Agnia.—Just as easy as anything! I was coming from town the other day; he caught up with me and walked along home; I said, "Thank you."

Darya Fedosevna.—And then asked him in?

Agnia.—What for?

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, then, how did he come to show himself at our house?

Agnia.—Oh, I invited him, but that was later. He took to walking past the window as often as ten times a day. Well, what could I do but ask him in? Rumors will get started, you know.

Darya Fedosevna.—Of course.

Agnia.—Shall I tell everything?

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes, let's have the whole story!

Agnia (*Calmly munching nuts*).—Then he wrote me a letter filled with various tender sentiments, only it was all jumbled up.

Darya Fedosevna.—Well? And you answered it?

Agnia.—Yes, only I did it in words. "What's the use of your writing a letter," says I, "when that's out of your line? If you have something that you've really *got* to say to me, you'd do lots better to speak right out instead of daubing up paper."

Darya Fedosevna.—And that's all there is to it?

Agnia.—Every bit! What more do you want?

Darya Fedosevna.—Seems to me you're getting mighty independent!

Agnia.—Supposing you lock me up, then!

Darya Fedosevna.—None o' your sass, missie!

MALANYA *comes in.*

SCENE II

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA *and* MALANYA

Malanya (*Speaks drawlingly*).—D'you know, I was walking along down the street . . .

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, what about it?

Malanya.—And he . . . he . . . Oh, what d'you call him?

Darya Fedosevna.—Him? Who's this you're talking about?

Malanya.—Now, let's see! Oh, dear, what's his name? One of the neighbors, you know.

Darya Fedosevna.—Go on!

Malanya.—I can't remember 'em all, there's such a lot of 'em! He's a dark-haired fellow.

Darya Fedosevna.—Grey-haired, isn't it?

Malanya.—That's right—grey! What's the matter with me! And I said that he was dark-haired!

Darya Fedosevna.—Akhov, maybe?

Malanya.—That's who it must have been—Akhov, I suppose: a great big man!

Darya Fedosevna.—Medium height?

Malanya.—Sure, that's what I meant to say!

Darya Fedosevna.—And now what about him? Will you be so good as to wake up?

Malanya.—What do you mean, wake up? I don't go to sleep when I'm walking, but when the time does come to sleep . . . So whose business is it? "Give 'em my compliments," says he.

Darya Fedosevna.—You haven't told us very much!

Malanya.—What else is there for me to say? (*Goes out and then immediately returns.*) Oh, yes! I forgot: "I'll run over," he says.

Darya Fedosevna.—When?

Malanya.—Who can tell anything about him? How should I know? (*Goes and returns.*) Say, it slipped my mind: "I'll run over today," he says. It was Akhov that you called him—quite a darkish man . . .

Darya Fedosevna.—Grey all over?

Malanya.—Grey—so it was! What a memory! Lordy! (*Goes out.*)

Scene III

Darya Fedosevna *and* Agnia

Darya Fedosevna.—We'd better send our servant Licharda as errand boy.* He delivers a message straight—just as good as a book. But when *she* begins to explain, it's just as if she had millstones turning around in her head.

Agnia.—That Akhov you were talking about is Ippolit's uncle, isn't he?

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes, his uncle.

Agnia.—It'll keep us from going for our walk if he calls. What's he coming for, anyhow?

Darya Fedosevna.—Who can tell what he's up to? Just see what it is to be rich! He's repulsive to me, positively repulsive—yet he's my guest! I won't get anything out of him, and I don't expect it. But how's a person to say "Get out" to him—and him a millionaire? A pretty state of affairs! And what a mean trick in people to start such a thing as bowing to money! But just hold on! Take his money away, and he's not worth a kopek. Yet everywhere he goes he is honored—and not because they want to gain anything from him but just as if he really did amount to something! Why don't they tell such fellows, "Here,

---

*A character in the folk tale "Bova Korolevich."—*Translators.*

we can get along without you and your money: you're nothing but a low-down brute." But they daresn't say it to his face! Women are sharper at this sort of thing. If only we had a little more grey matter! But why has he got started coming to us?

Agnia.—More'n likely he's in love!

Darya Fedosevna.—With whom?

Agnia.—Well, I think it's with you!

Darya Fedosevna.—Not with you?

Agnia.—What kind of match am I for him? But you're just the right sort, mamma! Only think! You'd be the wife of a rich merchant! Could anything be nicer?

Darya Fedosevna.—I should say so—Lord help me! I had a taste of that sort of thing, daughter. And even now, at night, I shiver when I remember it. Sometimes, at first, when I used to dream of your poor dead father, it'd fairly drive me into hysterics. You can imagine how I hate 'em, the old bullies! That's what my father was like, and my husband was still worse and all his friends were the same sort. They worried the life out of me! But just give me half a chance and I'd take it out on one of 'em for the whole crowd!

Agnia.—Oh, you would!

Darya Fedosevna.—I'd give 'em a bit of my mind! But I never have the chance! Well, anyhow, what's the use of boasting? I'm a meek sort, and I suppose I'd tone down before money! It's a cursed thing!

Agnia.—Particularly if you haven't got any!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, I'm off for my nap!

Agnia.—So long! (DARYA FEDOSEVNA *goes out.*)

SCENE IV

AGNIA, *later* IPPOLIT

Agnia (*Looking out of the window*).—Why, if he isn't going by again! That's a funny way of doing! (*Opens the window and bows.*) What's the matter, did you lose something? (IPPOLIT *outside the window: "Nothing except my heart, miss."*) What's the idea of walking back and forth? Why don't you come right in? (IPPOLIT *outside the window: "I daresn't, miss."*) What are you scared of? (IPPOLIT *outside the window: "Your mamma."*) What are you scared of her for? She's asleep! (IPPOLIT *outside the window: "Oh, if that's the case, I'll be right* *with you, miss.*") Such an attractive, good-looking young fellow —only so bashful! (IPPOLIT *enters; he is dressed neatly and stylishly; has a small beard and is rather handsome.*) Hello, there!

Ippolit.—I hope I find you well, miss!

Agnia.—We were looking for you. We're thinking of taking a walk. Don't you want to go?

Ippolit.—I'd be delighted, miss. (*Looks all around the room.*)

Agnia.—Don't get nervous, don't get nervous! She's asleep, I tell you!

Ippolit.—It's not exactly that I'm nervous, but you know I'm here without her invitation!

Agnia.—Oh, that's all right—I invited you!

Ippolit.—It may be all right, but it's not the same thing, miss! She'll pop in all of a sudden and'll thunder, "Unbidden guest, begone!" I've been in such scrapes before! Just the same, miss, it's kind of embarrassing!

Agnia.—Really? What do you mean?

Ippolit.—Yes, really—especially if you've got a master or a mistress with spirit! You'll go away laughing on the wrong side of your mouth and you'll keep looking around to see that they don't try to help you out by the nape of your neck!

Agnia (*Laughing*).—Have they helped you out that way?

Ippolit.—If they hadn't, I shouldn't know so much about their nice tricks!

Agnia.—But it's not possible!

Ippolit.—You can't expect it from cultured people, of course, but down at our place you can find most anything! And all the bullying that goes on around our house—well, it's just somethin' terrible! When he gets in his own home, every master is like Sultan Murad of Turkey! He almost chops off heads!

Agnia.—I guess you're a coward!

Ippolit.—What makes you so hard on me?

Agnia.—You're afraid of everything!

Ippolit.—That's just where you're wrong, miss! In fact, I even believe that I've got a streak of desperate boldness in me!

Agnia.—Against whom?

Ippolit.—Against everybody, miss!

Agnia.—Even against your master?

Ippolit.—Even my master, if he isn't sure of himself, won't get much out of me! I put him down in mighty fine shape!

Agnia.—Is that a fact!

Ippolit.—You can depend upon it!

Agnia.—Well, look out! I don't like cowards, I'll tell you in advance!

Ippolit.—Why not, miss? After all, I wasn't born that way! They don't train us from childhood to be heroes, but if a fellow takes a bold stand . . .

Agnia.—Then take it pretty often!

Ippolit.—That's your advice?

Agnia.—Yes, that's my advice! Don't you be afraid of my mamma!

Ippolit.—I'll make it a special point to do as you say!

Agnia.—All right, fine! And see that you mind me like that in everything!

Ippolit.—And now's the very time for you to teach me!

Agnia.—Why is it?

Ippolit.—I feel quite upset, and even my thoughts have gone all topsy-turvy and have got all scattered!

Agnia.—What's happened to you?

Ippolit.—It's because of my feelings!

Agnia.—Pray, what kind of sentimental fellow are you?

Ippolit.—I? I'm just in despair, that's what I am! I simply don't know how to put it in words, you see.

Agnia.—What would it be like?

Ippolit.—I could say it all in verse!

Agnia.—Oh, we can get along without that!

Ippolit (*Takes from the frame an embroidered ribbon for a book mark*).—Whom are you making this keepsake for?

Agnia.—What's that to you?

Ippolit.—Anyhow, I'll just keep it for myself!

Agnia.—Who says you can?

Ippolit.—Well, supposing I take it without anybody's say-so?

Agnia.—What, without permission! You could get arrested for that!

Ippolit.—Oh, I'd tell the judge that I took it for a keepsake!

Agnia.—Folks ask for keepsakes—they don't just help themselves!

Ippolit.—But supposing I don't get it from you?

Agnia.—Really, you don't deserve it! Put it back where it belongs!

Ippolit.—If you would only let me have it to enjoy for one day!

Agnia.—Not for a single hour!

Ippolit.—My, some folks are getting cruel!

Agnia.—Now, just for that speech, sir, you put it right back where you found it and don't you dare to touch it! I embroidered it for you, but you won't get it now!

Ippolit.—Oh, if it was intended for me, I have an absolute right to it!

Agnia.—You have no right at all! Give it here! (*Tries to take the ribbon.*)

Ippolit (*Lifting up his hand*).—No, you don't!

Agnia.—You think I haven't got any strength, do you? (*Tries to pull his hand down;* Ippolit *kisses her.*) What are you doing? How dare you?

Ippolit.—You see it's all my fault!

Agnia.—Shame on you! (*Sits down at embroidery frame and hangs her head.*)

Ippolit.—I really am ashamed. It was certainly rude of me. But if there's no chance of holding yourself back . . . Even though I'm not a real man yet—since I live in another person's house and am absolutely dependent for everything—yet in spite of all that, if I weren't entirely disagreeable to you, I could speak up in full to your mother as I should. (Agnia *is silent.*) In time, even I can be a man, and I just know that I understand my own business a whole lot better than some people do. (Agnia *is silent.*) Now, if there's anything that I really dread, it is this: what kind of answer are you going to give me? (Agnia *is silent and hangs her head still lower.*) Just one word! (Agnia *is silent.*) You don't mean that you're going to refuse to pay any attention at all to me, do you? Have a little pity, can't you? Perhaps you don't trust my feelings? I can swear to you with my whole soul. If my feelings weren't real, do you think I'd dare . . .

Agnia (*Casting down her eyes*).—Oh, all right, I believe you! But is it long to wait until you'll be a real man?

Ippolit.—When my master allows me a decent salary!

Agnia.—Well, then, you tell mamma and I'll tell her too. (*Happily*) But just the same, hand over that ribbon!

Ippolit.—No, sirree! It's my property now!

Agnia.—Of course it's *my* property! For I'm going to take it away! Only mind, if again . . .

Ippolit.—It can't be done, miss! (Agnia *grabs the ribbon;* Ippolit *kisses her;* Darya Fedosevna *comes in.*)

SCENE V

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA *and* IPPOLIT

Darya Fedosevna.—What's all this racket about? Can't we have a moment's peace? Here's a charming picture!

Agnia (Gives a faint shriek).—Oh! (AGNIA *sits down on the chair by her embroidery frame;* IPPOLIT *goes into a far corner and stands timidly in the doorway.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—Now, what's the meaning of all this?

Agnia.—All what? Nothing!

Darya Fedosevna.—Don't you tell me it's nothing: I saw him kissing you with my own eyes!

Agnia.—He kissed me! How shocking!

Darya Fedosevna.—Oh, then you don't consider it shocking?

Agnia.—Certainly! And if he had bitten me, that wouldn't have been nice either!

Darya Fedosevna.—Are you in your right mind or have your lost your senses? I suppose you have no shame!

Agnia.—Shame! Shame belongs to the rich! But we—well, it's nobody's business how we live! Good or bad, it's all for us and not for other people! Live well—people won't commend you; live badly—you won't surprise anybody!

Darya Fedosevna.—But just think of the way she spends her time!

Agnia.—You surely didn't think that I was playing with dolls all this time!

Darya Fedosevna.—And when her mother's back is turned!

Agnia.—Maybe I'll do it when you are here!

Darya Fedosevna.—So you haven't got any sense of shame!

Agnia.—I've got all I need!

Darya Fedosevna.—Just the same, it isn't nice for your own mother not to know!

Agnia.—There's nothing for you to know: nothing is settled yet. When the time comes, we will tell you, never fear: we know what is proper!

Darya Fedosevna.—It's only going to make matters worse to talk to you any more. But you had better look out or maybe you'll be sorry for it afterwards. The truth's the truth! You've started the Easter kiss out of season!

Agnia.—Just take it as advance payment. Of course a person might restrain himself—but what for? Our young days are not very happy anyhow. What can we have to remember them by?

Darya Fedosevna (*To* Ippolit).—Well, and how about you? Do you think that I let you into the house for this? Fine boy, fine boy!

Ippolit.—I've not got a thing to say for myself!

Darya Fedosevna.—How's a body to trust people like you! Set a fox to keep geese!

Ippolit.—Right now I can't talk any more than a dead man! I'm entirely at your mercy.

Darya Fedosevna.—Pretend to be an orphan! Well, I'll keep an eye open to see what you're up to—and I may turn you out, my boy!

Agnia.—That'll do for you!

Darya Fedosevna.—You don't like to hear it?

Agnia.—Oh, let's go for a walk!

Darya Fedosevna.—Have you got walking on the brain?

Agnia.—That's quite enough from you, mamma. You've done your duty and scolded us, and now quit!

Darya Fedosevna.—Oh, mischief take you, that's what I say! Well, anyhow, get ready and go for your walk!

Akhov *comes in.*

Scene VI

Darya Fedosevna, Agnia, Ippolit *and* Akhov

Akhov.—You see even I have stopped in to visit you in your poor hut!

Darya Fedosevna.—You are welcome! We are very glad that you don't disdain us.

Akhov.—I don't disdain you, I don't disdain you, Fedosevna. Appreciate this! Were you looking for such a guest? (*Looks askance at* Ippolit.)

Darya Fedosevna.—We were and we weren't!

Akhov.—How's that? I sent word by your old woman that you were to expect me!

Darya Fedosevna.—But you see that servant of ours is a freak. You can't stop to wait until her tongue gets straightened out!

Akhov (*To* Agnia).—Feeling pretty spry?

Agnia.—So so!

Akhov.—How does that come? You ought to have more fun! If your mother abuses you, just let me know about it!

Darya Fedosevna.—I humbly beg you to have a seat!

Akhov (*Glaring at* Ippolit).—I'll have a seat, I'll have a seat: you don't have to insist! (*Sits down on the couch.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—What will you have to drink, Ermil Zotych?

Akhov.—Wait until your guest gets comfortably seated before you offer him anything to drink!

Darya Fedosevna.—Get comfortable, then!

Akhov.—"Get comfortable, then"! First you take a look around! I have taken my seat, but there are no manners in your house: that's what.

Darya Fedosevna.—I don't know what you mean, sir.

Akhov (*To* Ippolit).—Well?

Ippolit.—What do you wish, uncle?

Akhov.—Oh, you don't know?

Ippolit.—What can I do for you?

Akhov.—You can come to your senses! Where are you?

Ippolit.—At Darya Fedosevna's, sir!

Akhov (*Mimicking him*).—"At Darya Fedosevna's"! Yes, I know you're at Darya Fedosevna's! Well, and does that mean that you *have* to be here?

Ippolit.—I came to call!

Akhov.—And now, why am *I* here?

Ippolit.—I naturally suppose that you are here for the same reason, uncle!

Akhov.—Well, are you fit company for me, or not? Now do you get the idea?

Ippolit.—What idea ought I to get, sir?

Akhov.—That where your master is, isn't any place for you. Do you understand?

Ippolit.—Yes, sir!

Akhov.—Well, then, be off with you!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why are you driving him away?

Agnia.—In our house, one guest is as good as another!

Akhov.—Much you know about it! This isn't your business! (*To* Ippolit) If you see your master a long way off, you ought to run. If you haven't got time to snatch your hat, then run without your hat, and let no more trace of you remain than if the wind had blown you from the face of the earth! Well, sir, whom d'you think I'm talking to?

Ippolit.—But permit me . . .

Akhov.—Have I got to drag you out of here by the hair?

Ippolit.—How can you! Before the ladies, sir . . .

Akhov.—"Before the ladies"! Much I care! I'll drag you out, and that'll be an end to it!

Ippolit.—Why such insults? I'm here in an honorable way!

Akhov (*Rises*).—Get out, I tell you!

Ippolit (*Takes his hat*).—Oh, if you really wish it!

Agnia.—Did you lose your nerve?

Akhov (*Stamping his foot*).—Not a word! Git! (IPPOLIT *goes out.*)

Agnia (*After him*).—Shame on you, shame on you, for being a 'fraid cat!

SCENE VII

AKHOV, DARYA FEDOSEVNA *and* AGNIA

Akhov.—I make people afraid! Bigger men than him are afraid of me.

Agnia.—Why, what makes you so ferocious?

Akhov.—I'm not ferocious! Now, the devil is ferocious, and again, they stick up a ferocious old scarecrow in the garden to frighten the crows. But you don't know how to use words! I'm not ferocious—I'm only stern! (*To* DARYA FEDOSEVNA.) And still you want to plump me down and give me something to eat in front of that kid!

Darya Fedosevna.—I don't see that he was in your way!

Akhov.—It's time that you did see! You weren't married to a peasant! There was even a kind of good order set up in your home. Perhaps you remember your husband's lessons even now! What kind of bad manners do you call these?

Darya Fedosevna.—No bad manners at all! But why have you started to teach me lessons? It's pretty late in the day and I don't need 'em!

Akhov.—What's that to me? Live as you have a mind to: the worse for you!

Darya Fedosevna.—I've got through life somehow or other and now there isn't much longer to live!

Akhov.—But just consider, will you, how could he stay in the same room with his master! Supposing I'm chatting away with you, and supposing I take a notion to jolly you up a bit!

Is he, gaping idiot, going to listen? He never heard a thing from me in his whole life but orders and abuse! What kind of awe would he have thenceforth? He'd say, "Our master talks just such nonsense as the rest of the folks do." He oughtn't to know that!

Darya Fedosevna.—We'll never be able to comprehend this cunning of yours!

Akhov.—Sometimes we get together, we masters and mistresses, and act so naughtily that tongue cannot tell it and pen cannot write it. If we allowed ourselves to associate with our clerks in this manner, what would they have to admire in us?

Darya Fedosevna.—That's your lookout!

Akhov.—Just what I say! Now, as soon as you see me—before you give me a seat, even, and before you start to entertain me—you should hustle him out of the door. It would be a lesson for him and nicer for me!

Darya Fedosevna.—Shouldn't you like to have some tea?

Akhov.—No, I don't care for any—you've insulted me! I came to see you with the kindest of intentions, but you didn't chose to pay any respect to me!

Darya Fedosevna.—It's very difficult to please you!

Akhov.—No, you just hold on, now! It's absolutely necessary for you to respect me. I should receive extra-special esteem in comparison with other people. Why so? I'll tell you if you don't know!

Darya Fedosevna.—Tell away, we'll listen!

Akhov.—Cherish a rich man more than the apple of your eye if he is kindly disposed to you! If you have no property of your own, whom can you call on if you get into a tight place? Second: do you really know—is another man's soul open to you?—why a rich man is gracious to you? Maybe he is only letting himself have a little fun; yet again, maybe he's in earnest. For us fellows, if we want anything, price is no object; but you poor things have nothing sacred: everything is for sale! And suddenly a kopek turns into a ruble! Do you understand?

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, not all at once!

Akhov.—You will presently! (*To* Agnia) Can you kiss me now in front of your mother?

Agnia.—I can if I choose!

Akhov.—Aw, please choose! It won't do you any harm!

Agnia.—'Tisn't necessary that it do me any good! But just so as not to get into a needless discussion over a trifling matter, here you are! (*Kisses him.*)

Akhov (*To* DARYA FEDOSEVNA).—There, did you see?

Darya Fedosevna—What was there to see? I've witnessed better things in my day! It's nothing so wonderful to smack with your lips! Even if she did do it to you—what of that? It's all the same as pot against kettle—no matter how much you smash 'em together, you won't get any butter. But then there's a matter which is quite a different sort. Then a mother had better keep her eyes open!

Akhov.—No, you listen! Why is it that wealth is so enticing? This is why: whatever you have a mind for—whatever you just think about, even—it's always yours!

Agnia.—Well, if I'd known that you would think that about my favor, I wouldn't have kissed you for worlds!

Akhov.—Now, you hush, just hush! You haven't done anything wicked! No, I tell you, if all my life I've had maybe more than a hundred people in my hands, how can I help feeling important? Everybody wants pound-cake—but what about those who have absolutely nothing to eat! Ah, they buy the people dirt cheap, just dirt cheap! Will you believe it, sometimes I, even *I*, feel sorry for 'em!

Darya Fedosevna.—Then why take such satisfaction in wealth?

Akhov.—Why, indeed! (*With a sigh.*) Influence, Fedosevna, influence!

Darya Fedosevna.—Oh, what's the use of talking!

Akhov.—Well, you ponder and dream over it when you're all cumfy with your pillow! Perhaps the affair will turn out better! (*Rises*) Well, good bye for the present! But never you mind—I'm not angry!

Darya Fedosevna.—It's a good thing you aren't! What'd be the use of getting angry?

Akhov.—Of course, since you've been poor for a long time you've got out of the way of decent living, but just give you money again and you'll be right there once more!

Darya Fedosevna.—You had better believe it!

Akhov.—So figure it out, Darya Fedosevna! (*Meaningly*) I'm giving you a little tip: remember one thing—there's nobody like God! (*To* AGNIA) Good bye, little dragonfly!

Agnia.—Good bye, Ermil Zotych!

Akhov.—But I shall certainly come again soon! Something just draws me to you! Of course you'll have to do your part, too—well, never mind, that will come! Say, shall I run in tomorrow?

Darya Fedosevna.—Why do you ask? Come whenever you feel like it!

Akhov.—Fine, fine! (*In a low voice to* DARYA FEDOSEVNA.) I'll be over tomorrow!

Darya Fedosevna.—What's the mystery?

Akhov (*Nudges her with his elbow*).—Figure it out for yourself! (*Goes out.*)

SCENE VIII

DARYA FEDOSEVNA *and* AGNIA

Agnia.—Mamma, when Ippolit gets here, you just send him packing without any mercy!

Darya Fedosevna.—But don't send Ermil packing?

Agnia.—What has *he* done? What's he to blame for? How can he help getting puffed up when everybody is forever eating humble pie before him!

Darya Fedosevna.—Say what you please, I feel sorry for Ippolit!

Agnia.—Why feel sorry for him: he's no baby! Now, if he had any sense of decency, he'd feel ashamed to have folks pitying him! Such a baby as they've hurt! I can't stand him!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why so severe?

Agnia.—Well, supposing he were married and were here with his wife: what would it be like for the poor thing!

Darya Fedosevna.—Just have a try at making Ermil listen to reason!

Agnia.—He's not tied to Ermil with a rope! Let him cut loose and get out! I pretty nearly fell in love with him—with that crybaby!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, I see quite clearly that every day in the week is Friday for you!* You're not fairly in love when you're out of it again!

Agnia.—Well, I certainly have stopped loving him!

Darya Fedosevna.—And I've taken a greater fancy than ever to him!

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*A Russian saying, meaning to be fickle.—*Translators.*

Agnia.—Well, I congratulate you!

Darya Fedosevna.—And I give you my advice!

Agnia.—All right, but it won't do any good!

Darya Fedosevna.—For he's a nice young fellow!

Agnia.—He's disgusting, positively disgusting!

Darya Fedosevna.—Is Akhov any better?

Agnia.—No comparison!

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes, such a fine man! Well, go ahead and kiss your Akhov!

Agnia.—Well, that's better than kissing Ippolit, anyhow!

Darya Fedosevna.—You should've thought of this before!

Agnia.—Don't rub it in, don't rub it in! I'm just cursing myself as it is.

Darya Fedosevna.—I'm not rubbing it into you. But to my way of thinking, if you like a fellow, you had better keep hold of him!

Agnia.—Why shouldn't I? He deserves it! I know what I'll do! I'll write to him not to dare to show his face at our house! (*Goes into the other room.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—It won't do any good to write—you'll just be inking up your fingers for nothing!

Agnia.—Not altogether for nothing! (*Goes out.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—Of course it'll be for nothing! Now, look here! After a little while you'll set to work and write another letter and tell him to come right over!

Agnia (*From the other room*).—Not for anything, not for anything in the world!

Darya Fedosevna.—I believe it all right!

Agnia.—You'd better stop talking! It's the end to an acquaintance—that's all!

Darya Fedosevna.—Oh, I see, says the blindman! (*Goes out.*)

ACT II

The same scenery as in Act I

Scene I

Darya Fedosevna (*on the couch*) *and* Feona (*in the easy chair*) *are drinking tea. On the table is a samovar.* Malanya *is standing near the door, propping her cheek with her hand.*

Darya Fedosevna.—Been to mass, Feona, dear?

Feona.—That's where I've been, my friend!

Darya Fedosevna.—Where did you attend it?

Feona.—At Hamovniki!

Darya Fedosevna.—It was a good way off, then?

Feona.—Indeed it was! I never could've stood it if it hadn't been for my devotion. It's so . . . . (*Sets down her cup.*)

Darya Fedosevna (*Pouring*).—Do drink some more!

Feona.—I will, never fear!

Malanya.—That's just the way it is! People living in idleness always find things disagreeable if they let themselves down! Sometimes in the morning, maybe, you just get so soft and lanquid—it's positively as if they had poisoned you! Your very flesh seems dull and lifeless and even your joints feel wobbly. And to say nothing of some important matters that it's your Christian duty to attend to, you 're too lazy even to lift a samovar! You want to keep lounging around all the time!

Feona.—Here, girl, you get that nonsense out of your head. Get hold of yourself and just toe the mark! Otherwise it won't be long before you'll be completely petrified! That's what happened to one woman down at our place. It was just as if she were full of lead. "I haven't any understanding or interest for a single thing," says she.

Malanya.—Of course it's on account of our sins! And I—don't I say the same!

Feona.—You should have lived at our Ermil Zotych's house! He had his tea before morning mass!

Malanya.—Well, now, how could he!

Darya Fedosevna.—What kind of important business has he got on hand?

Feona.—What sort of business, indeed, except to growl and go around to see that they don't go to sleep! The old tyrant! He's a big disgrace to his own hospitality! You choke yourself on a bone of his! He throws it in your face a dozen times a day! He cries out, "I feed you and pay you an allowance," but he never stops to think of a person's work! I don't doubt at all that he'd be tickled to death if he could stretch one working day into two! Well, he goes prowling around awfully early; he prowls around the yard and he prowls around the garden and around the sheds and around the stables. Then he goes into the factory, and there too he just gets in everybody's way. A man's going about his business, maybe, but he has to stop him and sail into him without the slightest provocation! He says it will come in handy for the future! Then when he goes away from the mill, he's forever quarrelling with the children. And that's the extent of his business at our house!

Darya Fedosevna.—You don't need to tell me! My old man was just such a fellow! It was the same tailor that made 'em both, I'll warrant you! There's just one difference: my man plagued us and plagued us and then went off almost a beggar! But your man is buried up to his neck in money and he's been stuck there so long that he's lost count of it!

Feona.—Well, what if there is money! It's nothing but a sin! It's all right if it happens to slip into your hand—but who knows anything about him and what's on his mind? One son of his, Nikolay Ermilyich, ran away from home!

Darya Fedosevna.—Was that long ago?

Feona.—He ran away, my friend, he ran away to a mother-in-law. But he moved out again in a week. He was a meek little man but he just couldn't stand it. Would you believe it, he grew quite thin! When he walked, his whole body fairly trembled. And his wife, a frail little woman, was altogether changed. She would rise in tears and go to bed in tears. The old man was forever digging into them about the estate. "You're just longing for my death," says he, "and you're just waiting to get your hands on my money. Haven't you got enough freedom? Just hold your horses!" says he, "I ain't going to part with my pile as soon as all that! First of all I'm going to show you how to live. I'm going to torment you so much to make you pay for my property that you won't care to get the money!"

Malanya.—He's a regular viper, that man of yours!

Feona.—He's a viper through and through! (*Sets down her cup on the table.*) Much obliged!

Darya Fedosevna.—Shouldn't you like some more?

Feona.—I really couldn't! I've drunk my fill; besides I'll have more when I get home. What else is there to do to amuse one? But why don't you go ahead and drink, anyhow?

Darya Fedosevna.—I'd already had some with Agnia and I was just taking this to keep you company. Malanya, remove the tea! (MALANYA *picks up the samovar and the tray with the cups and goes out.*)

Feona.—And then there's Grisha at our house—the other one, my friend . . .

Darya Fedosevna.—I know, I know!

Feona.—He's not that kind! He's a gay bird—it's evident that he takes after the old man!

Darya Fedosevna.—Does he love him?

Feona.—It's quite out of the question to love him, my friend! He's already quite flighty and so stupid that—Lord help him! All that he knows how to do is to bow low to his father—and when it comes to drinking and carousing around, you won't find his beat! As a result of just this thing, his eyesight has got dim. When he comes in drunk from somewhere or other—or when they carry him in—he opens his eyes wide like a ram and stares in one direction and begins to strike his forehead on the floor before his father. Then when his father forgives him he goes and disappears again for a long time. How many complaints there have been against him and how much money has been paid out for him! But he began to play the fool not long since: they brought him home from some kind of hot place, goodness only know where, only they brought him in bound; and with him were two people whom he had beaten up—and one, they said, he had drowned in the Moscow River. Well, there was no way out of it: his father paid for the damage to those he had beaten up. But they gave drink as well as money to the drowning man and the folks who had fished him out of the water. Then his father banished him to the mill so that they could keep him there under lock and key until he calmed down.

Darya Fedosevna.—Isn't that a mixup for you! What a life these rich merchants lead! A person doesn't envy their wealth!

Feona.—What is there to be envious about in him, my friend? In this wealth there's a sad lot of other people's tears, and they cry out, I've heard, to the seventh generation!

Darya Fedosevna.—Of course the old man's all alone now—I suppose that's why he's got started coming to see us!

Feona.—Well-nigh alone. We have an old house that used to belong to a prince. It's got forty rooms and it's so empty . . . You just have to say one word and an echo will start up! There he wanders alone through the rooms. Yesterday he went around when it was dark and lost himself in his own house! He called for the police at the top of his voice. I had a hard time finding him and bringing him back! That's why he strolls over to your house—from boredom! They brought Grisha from the mill again, my friend, only he was a sick man.

The doctor called and an old dissenter came and they put live tenches to the soles of his feet. In the factory we have a German overseer, Wander, and he's such a wicked one to drink that it's a wonder how the human stomach can stand it! It's all the same as nothing to him no matter how much he drinks—the more the better! He always gets wide-eyed and redder in the face! Well, our lad was still young and he couldn't stand it, and he got light-headed. He started to run out on the balcony and fire off guns at the peasants. Of course he didn't intend to do this. Maybe *they* attacked him in Moscow and we didn't know anything about it. At first, he says, *they* began to fly around him like bees and then they appeared in their own form as they ought to be. Now he always tries to hide from them. Oh, I've got to to be going or he'll start fussing!

Darya Fedosevna.—Stay a little, do! Who tends to business at your place?

Feona.—The young nephew, my friend.

Darya Fedosevna.—Ippolit?

Feona.—He's the one, my friend, he's the one—Apolit. *No matter whether it's in the office or at the factory, he's the fellow!

Darya Fedosevna.—What sort of person is this lad? I've been meaning to ask you for a long time.

Feona.—Well, to sum it all up, he's a martyr, my friend, a long-suffering martyr. He's working for everybody all the time and he never has a moment's peace. Scoldings are all that he has to look forward to!

Darya Fedosevna.—Doesn't he drink?

Feona.—Where are your wits, my friend? Not a weenty teenty drop! But he'll have to begin drinking pretty soon, I suppose.

Darya Fedosevna.—Why?

Feona.—He can't stand it—it's impossible! It's all the same in our place: let him keep himself decent or let him get drunk—it all amounts to the same thing! You can't expect the master to speak a kind word. So why under the sun should he be temperate? At first Apolit, all the same, was rather jolly, but now he's so gloomy that everything goes to show that he's getting ready to drink. He's short of money, poor fellow, and he has no position except what the master allows him out of kindness!

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*Feona's illiterate pronunciation.—*Translators.*

Darya Fedosevna.—Ah, the poor thing!

Feona.—But why are you asking all about him? Trying to make a match for somebody?

Darya Fedosevna.—Supposing I am trying to make a match—is that anything wicked?

Feona.—Nobody said it was! Isn't it for your daughter?

Darya Fedosevna.—Certainly! I have a girl to marry off!

Feona.—Well, I *have* found a fool, I do believe! Why on earth do you want a man who is serving a master?

Darya Fedosevna.—I've been under a master, too, and have had my share of trouble. Of course, if a responsible man comes along, we won't be squeamish about him!

Feona.—Why be squeamish! Everything for a long time has gone to show that your bird would be in a golden cage!

Darya Fedosevna.—Ah, Feona dear, a cage is ever a cage, no matter how you gild it!

Feona.—Seems to me that our old man has already started praising up your daughter a good bit!

Darya Fedosevna.—Let him praise all he wants to. That can't do us any harm!

Feona.—Why shouldn't he sing her praises—it's what everybody does! You know he's quite a freakish thing, the old rascal! He goes and says things that aren't proper for him to say. And he's way past sixty—she's young enough to be his granddaughter. But he, bless him, frisks around like a kid!

Darya Fedosevna.—What's that you say?

Feona.—Come, now, don't you know him? He'll do anything!

Darya Fedosevna.—Is that so?

Feona.—Of course it's so if I say it! It isn't the first time he has put Moscow to shame! He used to run after rich girls—he had that much nerve—but they showed him the door at three houses. And now he has something else on the brain. "I'll make my selection from the poor," says he, "some rather good-looking person. She won't forget my kindness her whole life—and what low bows I'll get from her relatives! A girl's a girl, and I'll have my fling!"

Darya Fedosevna.—But you know these rich old duffers have got too high an idea of themselves, but when it comes to brains—well, they just aren't there!

Feona.—No, my friend, no! It's just one grand bluff! But when they knock the fire out of him, he'll be like a wet crow! Gracious me! I've got to be going!

Darya Fedosevna.—Good bye, Feona dear! (*Behind the scenes, the voice of* AGNIA: "*Don't ums cwy, don't ums gwieve, tweetie pet!*"

Feona.—That's your daughter, eh?

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes, that's little Agnia.

Feona.—What a little sunbeam, bless her! (AGNIA *comes in.*)

SCENE II

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, FEONA *and* AGNIA

Agnia.—Hello, auntie!

Feona.—Hello, dearie! Why were you keeping so quiet? Sing! It's your day to sing! Do you know what it is inside of you that sings?

Agnia.—What?

Feona.—Liberty! But the time's going to come when you'll lay aside your song book!

Agnia.—But I won't go into slavery!

Feona.—You might not like to go into slavery, but what if it's so ordained? Best wishes! Why don't you drive me away? Good bye! (*Goes out*)

(AGNIA *sits down to the embroidery frame and muses.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—Talk it over with your own mother! Why are you sighing there all by your lonesome? I'm your friend, you know, not your enemy!

Agnia.—No, mamma! I'm afraid I'll get started crying—and what good does crying do? (*Works*)

Darya Fedosevna.—Shall I tell you the latest?

Agnia.—Do!

Darya Fedosevna.—You've made a big hit with Ermil Zotych!

Agnia.—Oh, that's enough to kill me!

Darya Fedosevna (*Smiling*).—I was going to tell you all about it, but I'll let the matter stand, if you like!

Agnia.—Yes, let's leave it alone, by all means!

Darya Fedosevna.—I'm not going to take your liberty from you!

Agnia (*Working*).—Oh, thank you very much!

Darya Fedosevna.—Money never made anybody tired in the world!

Agnia.—I should say not!

Darya Fedosevna.—Least of all if he didn't have any!

Agnia.—Well, that's self-evident!

Darya Fedosevna.—And position, too, counts for something!

Agnia.—I agree with you.

Darya Fedosevna.—He's a suitor that one could envy you!

Agnia.—It leaves nothing to be desired.

Darya Fedosevna.—Only he's old!

Agnia.—That doesn't matter.

Darya Fedosevna.—And he has a beastly temper.

Agnia.—He'll outgrow that, God willing!

Darya Fedosevna.—Say, what's the matter with you, anyhow? What makes you act so foolishly?

Agnia.—What do you mean?

Darya Fedosevna.—I never heard such talk from you before!

Agnia.—And I never heard any such from you. If it was just fun on your part, it was just fun on mine too. And if you you were in earnest, so was I in earnest!

Darya Fedosevna.—I was just joking, but I didn't have a very good time! Who can fathom you, you queer little witch!

Agnia.—Well, don't you joke again!

Darya Fedosevna.—What if he really makes a proposal to you?

Agnia.—Well, can't you find some reply to make?

Darya Fedosevna.—Certainly I can find something.

Agnia.—Then what more do you want?

Daary Fedosevna.—But if he asks *you*, what're you going to say?

Agnia.—I'll be an angel child and say, "Just as mamma thinks best!"

Darya Fedosevna.—Good! That's the way to do it! (IPPOLIT *comes in.*)

SCENE III

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA *and* IPPOLIT

Ippolit.—A good morning to you, ma'am!

Darya Fedosevna.—Hello there, darling! (AGNIA *bows slightly without speaking.*) Have a seat—why do you keep standing?

Ippolit (*Seating himself*).—To tell the truth, ma'am, I haven't much time to spare. I'll have to be about my business in just a moment: I'm going collecting!

Darya Fedosevna.—They'll wait for you!

Ippolit.—Folks wait around with promissory notes but not with money. If I'm a half hour late, I'll have to go to Krasnoyarsk to catch him.

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, to my way of thinking, it would have been a great deal better if you hadn't come in at all, seeing that you haven't any time to give us. That's a nice way of doing—turning around and going right away again! I haven't any patience with such things!

Ippolit.—On account of the direction of the road, I had to go past your place; so I thought it would be rude not to drop in.

Darya Fedosevna.—Much obliged, I'm sure. What's new?

Ippolit.—Oh, just the same old rut—nothing new.

Darya Fedosevna.—Are you going to ask for your salary pretty soon?

Ippolit.—How can I ask for it when I've been ordered to keep my mouth closed? Well, I'll see what'll happen next!

Darya Fedosevna.—I'll be just the same as before if you stand around with your mouth open. But put the knife to his throat—that's the whole thing!

Ippolit.—I wasn't brought up on any such principles!

Darya Fedosevna.—Do as you please! I mean well by you!

Ippolit.—Anyhow, I'm going to weigh your words carefully!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, consider that you mustn't be a child all your life! What have you got to look forward to?

Ippolit.—He promises a big recompence. Only if you count on him, you'll be a big fool to the end of your days in spite of all your dreaming!

Darya Fedosevna.—It wouldn't matter if you were a fool—if it weren't anything worse than that!

Ippolit.—Indeed, I'm on my guard as to behavior as much as I have the strength and power. Any other fellow in my place would have weakened long ago and would have fallen into that class of people that aren't worth anybody's attention. When you're a kid you put up with teasing and hair-pulling, for such things seem to suit that stage of life. But if you think about your dignity and wish to keep yourself in the good graces of certain people and suddenly you are yanked back—it seems like a slap in your face! It's an insult!

Darya Fedosevna.—It certainly is an insult!

Ippolit.—In return for your labors, you want to be treated with respect and according to all your rights as a citizen. But the first thing you know, they steer you around to the nursery again, and then your soul flames up like fire!

Darya Fedosevna.—But who's holding you back? You aren't his bond slave!

Ippolit.—But where have I got to go to, ma'am? Into a shop at three hundred rubles a year? Must I struggle for five years in the most miserable position? When am I ever going to be a real man? Now, all the same, there is one thing that's not so bad—that I'm in a flourishing business and am the nephew of a rich man! Just the same, it's an honor for me!

Darya Fedosevna.—Where, at the tavern?

Ippolit.—Well, at the tavern, anyhow!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, since it's all your own fault, there's nothing to pity you for!

Ippolit.—Maybe he'll come to his senses sometime or other!

Darya Fedosevna.—You've got a fat chance to get any sense out of him!

Ippolit.—By all rights, I ought to get fifteen thousand from him!

Darya Fedosevna.—Have all the rights you have a mind to—but it's terribly tiresome to listen to you! Well, I'd better go and get to work! (*Goes out.*)

SCENE IV

AGNIA *and* IPPOLIT

Agnia.—Why did you lie to me yesterday and say that you weren't afraid of your master?

Ippolit.—You know it's very humiliating to acknowledge anything like that, miss. A fellow has to make himself out the best he can so that folks will consider him a man.

Agnia.—You're a coward, and what's more you're a liar! With a character like yours, you'll never get any money from your master—and more'n likely he'll just drive you out!

Ippolit.—Good gracious, what for! In that case—in the face of his incivility—I'll have to be rude myself!

Agnia.—You ought to have struck that idea long ago!

Ippolit.—Perhaps I had better rebel?

Agnia.—Yes, rebel!

Ippolit.—Seeing that you give your consent, I'll do it. If a man doesn't know how he ought to act and is not affected by words, you need to give him an object lesson so that he'll reform his rude character somewhat.

Agnia.—How are you going to bring it home to him?

Ippolit.—It won't take much! Here I have him in my hands right now! (*Displays a promissory note.*) The only drawback to the whole affair is that I've got a pretty big conscience bump!

Agnia.—It's a good thing that it's plenty big! It's quite out of the question to love a man without a conscience!

Ippolit.—It's lucky that you told me this beforehand, miss!

Agnia.—Didn't you know?

Ippolit.—Now, how was I to know your likes and dislikes, miss? As a rule, miss, most women have the idea that though it's highway robbery, a man ought to bring in money just for her sake and for the home!

Agnia.—I don't love a thief, though others may if they wish—that's none of my business!

Ippolit.—So I must do it just in order to gain your love?

Agnia.—Don't you talk to me about love, if you please!

Ippolit.—Why not, miss?

Agnia.—I don't care to love a boy! You're a fine man, aren't you?

Ippolit.—According to your words, miss, I'm the most insignificant man, I suppose?

Agnia.—That's your lookout!

Ippolit.—Despised by everybod . .

Agnia.—Well, whose fault is it?

Ippolit.—Instead of my getting any comfort from you . . .

Agnia.—They'll beat you up like a boy, but I ought to comfort you! Where did you get hold of that grand idea?

Ippolit.—Who's going to feel sorry for me, miss?

Agnia.—What's that to do with me? I'll laugh at you instead of pitying you!

Ippolit.—After this, all that is left for me to do is to die on the spot!

Agnia.—No doubt that would be better!

Ippolit.—I suppose you have a very poor opinion of me?

Agnia.—Exceedingly!

Ippolit.—Yet such a blow from you! I really don't know how to endure it!

Agnia.—I'm very glad!

Ippolit.—Meaning that you don't make any allowances for human nature?

Agnia.—Don't you think it!

Ippolit.—Well, I *have* made a fine mess of it! And such a jolt to my feelings! I've made a mistake in my life. . . .

Agnia (*Wiping her tears*).—You weren't mistaken, it was I who was mistaken! Go away, please! Go away, I tell you! It makes me ashamed—me, a grown-up girl, not to be able to tell the difference between people. Nobody dragged me to you!

Ippolit.—But permit me in my own defense . . .

Agnia.—Go away, go away!

Ippolit.—But anyhow, pity me some—even if it's just a wee speck!

Agnia.—Now, you listen! Today you beg a good fat salary for yourself from your master or else run away from him and find another place. If you don't, it'll be better for you not to know me at all, and you'd better not dare to show yourself around me!

Ippolit.—This is quite the final word from you, miss?

Agnia.—Quite!

Ippolit.—Well, then, I know what I'm going to do! I've had this trick up my sleeve a long time!

Agnia.—Do what you like, only on the square!

Ippolit.—I can't say as to that! You'll have to judge for yourself later on. Even though you cut off my head, I'll not give up my point!

Agnia.—That's your business!

Ippolit.—Good bye, then, miss!

Agnia (*Bowing*).—Good bye!

Ippolit.—Therefore the parting is to be cold?

Agnia.—Is there anything else?

Ippolit.—Even if it's just your little hand, miss . . .

Agnia.—Not one little finger. (DARYA FEDOSEVNA *comes in.*)

SCENE V

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA *and* IPPOLIT, *later* MALANYA

Ippolit (*To* DARYA FEDOSEVNA).—Stand by me, ma'am!

Darya Fedosevna.—What in?

Ippolit.—I want to start war on my master!

Agnia.—See that you don't start blubbering in front of your master instead of warring!

Ippolit.—What mockery is this, miss? No, indeed! My soul's all afire now!

Darya Fedosevna.—But what have I got to do with all this? I don't understand, darling!

Ippolit.—In a half hour I'll explain to you precisely! (MALANYA *enters and sighs wihout spaking.*)

Agnia.—What miracles do happen!

Ippolit.—Yes, I'll show you what kind of man I am!

Malanya.—An old man's coming!

Darya Fedosevna.—What sort of old man?

Malanya (*Sighing*).—Grey-haired!

Ippolit.—It's not my master already, is it?

Malanya.—I expect it is the master. Yes, it is he. . . . What was I saying? (*Goes out.*)

Ippolit.—I almost got caught!

Darya Fedosevna.—Go out through my room and don't meet each other! (IPPOLIT *goes into* DARYA FEDOSEVNA'S *room.* DARYA FEDOSEVNA *meets* AKHOV *in the entrance hall and re-enters with him.*)

SCENE VI

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA *and* AKHOV

Darya Fedosevna.—Welcome, Ermil Zotych! Make yourself right at home! (AGNIA *bows.*)

Akhov.—Yes! "Make yourself right at home, make yourself right at home!" Why do they love me so everywhere I go? Everywhere it is, "Make yourself right at home!"

Darya Fedosevna.—Do you think it's on account of your wealth?

Akhov.—Go ahead and pretend! There're no two ways about it, Fedosevna. It's a mark of distinction from other people!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why, of course!

Akhov.—When a poor man comes, if you wish, if you feel like it, you give him your time; if you feel like it, you send him about his business. But take a rich man—even though he behave rudely, you honor him. (*Pointing to* AGNIA.) Working?

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes!

Akhov.—Ah, that's fine!

Darya Fedosevna.—To pass away the time!

Akhov.—How old is she? I always forget to ask you.

Darya Fedosevna.—Twenty!

Akhov.—Not so very old yet! (*In an undertone.*) Does she think about lovers?

Darya Fedosevna.—Why, what kind of lovers could she expect without a dowry?

Akhov.—To such girls as she, the Lord sends lovers invisibly!

Darya Fedosevna.—Who ever heard of such a thing?

Akhov.—No, don't you say that! It does happen—for virtue! Particularly those who are gentle and dutiful—suddenly a man will appear from nowhere, a thing that was not imagined, about which you did not dare to think!

Darya Fedosevna.—Such things happen, maybe, but they happen very seldom!

Akhov.—You've got to pray well and it will happen!

Darya Fedosevna.—But we do pray!

Akhov.—Have you been to St. Paraskeva's?

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes.

Akhov.—Well, now, wait! Just you be patient! If a man pays his addresses—especially if he has a fortune—you give him to her right away, because that was her destiny! But don't you give her to a poor man!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why in the world should I?

Akhov.—Aren't there plenty of foolish young girls? It doesn't take long to give away, and what's the sense? And then there are some people who don't understand their own happiness on account of their pride!

Darya Fedosevna.—We're not proud!

Akhov.—Well, what've you got to be proud of? A rich man—well, let him be proud, let him put on airs! But in your case, Fedosevna—just you be humble! Be humble to everybody and be humble for everything, and you'll get something for your humility and it'll be pleasanter for everybody concerned!

Darya Fedosevna.—Much obliged for your advice. God grant you good health!

Akhov.—I'm speaking the truth! You're an orphan and your daughter's an orphan. Whoever protects you—whether it's your benefactor or your own father—well, you bow down to his feet. And see that you don't, like other women, owing to your silly nonsense, turn your nose away from your benefactor!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, you don't need to tell me—I know already!

Akhov.—You know, and it's time you knew! You went to school with your late husband! Fear does everybody good. That's why you're wise! But now-a-days the young folks are incorrigible! Did you educate your daughter in fear?

Darya Fedosevna.—I did indeed, Ermil Zotych, in fear! But here, you talk to her and I'll go and see what Malanya is doing there! (*Goes out.*)

Scene VII

Agnia *and* Akhov

Akhov.—Now, what shall we talk about?

Agnia.—About anything you choose.

Akhov.—Do you know the law?

Agnia.—What kind of law?

Akhov.—Oh, just the plain ordinary kind—how to honor your parents and your elders?

Agnia.—Yes, I know it!

Akhov.—Knowing it doesn't count for much—you've got to practice it!

Agnia.—I practice it! I do everything that mamma wishes; I don't go against her will at all!

Akhov.—That's right, that's right! Just whatever our mother tells you, from the smallest little thing to the largest. . . .

Agnia.—Yes, from the smallest little thing to the largest. . . .

Akhov.—That's what makes me love you!

Agnia.—I humbly thank you!

Akhov.—And how I do love you! Now don't you mind that I'm an old man. I'm a wonder, I am! You see me in a modest role, maybe, and perhaps that's your idea of me! But there's something else in me, too! If I take a notion, I can change myself. I can do anything! I'm a powerful man, I am!

Agnia.—That's pleasant to hear!

Akhov.—Have you heard that there're some kinds of old rogues who marry young girls?

Agnia.—Of course I have, and I've also heard that there're young girls who marry old men!

Akhov.—Well, it's six of one and a half dozen of the other!

Agnia.—No, it's not six of one and a half dozen of the other! It's pleasant for an old man to marry a young girl, but what sport is it for the girl?

Akhov.—You don't understand this?

Agnia.—No, I don'tw.

Akhov.—Well, I'll explain to you!

Agnia.—Do!

Akhov.—Well, take yourself, for example. You're a poor girl, but you wish to live. Well, now, how can you do it like a lady? Maybe you'd like some sort of cloak, or hat, and to ride with fine horses in some sort of stylish carriage, and all that sort of thing . . .

Agnia.—Yes, yes! Oh, how splendid!

Akhov.—Well, that's the point! I see right through your whole soul. I know everything you have in your mind. This is what you are thinking: "I'll marry a poor man and will be neglected all my life. A rich young man will not marry me. Give me a chance and I'll listen to clever folks and marry an old man with money." Now isn't that the way you were reasoning?

Agnia.—That's it, that's it!

Akhov.—"An old man will likely do this and that for my love." (*Very seriously*) Such presents as they will make! Glory!

Agnia.—Really, truly?

Akhov.—Worth thousands! Worth thousands, I tell you! And even before you're married, he'll take you out every single evening!

Agnia.—That's the life!

Akhov.—I tell you what! But when he does marry, then his wife really begins to live! What gayety!

Agnia.—Yes, yes!

Akhov.—How about it? Does it sound good?

Agnia.—Of course it sounds good! No sorrows, no cares, just dress yourself up!

Akhov.—Jolly, ain't it?

Agnia.—Awfully jolly! And then, again, it's pleasant to think that after a year or two, maybe, your husband will die—he doesn't have two centuries to live—and you will be left a young widow with money and with perfect freedom to do what your soul wishes!

Akhov.—You don't know what you're talking about! You yourself may die first!

Agnia.—Oh, excuse me!

Akhov.—You said it all very nicely, but you spoiled it with that last! Don't you ever think of it and don't you keep it on your mind. It's a sin, a great sin! D'you hear?

Agnia.—I'll never think it! It just sort of slipped from my tongue. I'll remember that it's the young that die first.

Akhov.—Ahem! Well, that's better!

Agnia.—Please, you won't tell this to mamma, will you?

Akhov.—Why, are you afraid?

Agnia.—Yes, I am!

Akhov.—That's good! To have fear—that's the best of all for a man.

Agnia.—Have you got it?

Akhov.—But whom have I got to be afraid of? Besides, I don't need it! I'm wise enough anyhow! Fear is good for a man if he is a subordinate. And as for a woman—for every one of 'em and at all times! Now, you fear your mother and fear your husband and that's the way you'll have the praise of clever people.

Agnia.—What can be better? (DARYA FEDOSEVNA *comes in.*)

SCENE VIII

AGNIA, AKHOV *and* DARYA FEDOSEVNA

Akhov.—Well, now, I understand what kind of folks you are, both of you!

Darya Fedosevna.—Thank goodness, Ermil Zotych!

Akhov (*Rises*).—I'm at your house quite informally now. But towards evening you can expect me as a guest, an important guest.

Darya Fedosevna.—We'll expect you.

Akhov.—And don't go to any great expense. Why should you?

Darya Fedosevna.—That's my affair!

Akhov.—Did you think, did you imagine, that I would fall in love with you like this?

Darya Fedosevna.—I didn't even dream of such a thing!

Akhov.—Well, good bye! What's the use of talking any more now? There'll be plenty of time. (*To* AGNIA) Good bye, dearie!

Agnia.—Good bye, Ermil Zotych! (AKHOV *and* DARYA FEDOSEVNA *move toward the door.*)

Akhov.—You've got a clever daughter!

Darya Fedosevna.—Even I commend her!

Akhov.—But you know there are some daughters that are just an affliction. Mother goes her way, daughter goes hers! Nobody likes to watch that. (*To* AGNIA) You listen to me! If your mother gives you any orders, then it's an evident case!

Agnia.—No doubt!

Akhov.—Well, good bye! (*Goes and returns.*) What saints have you been praying to that fortune has been so kind to you?

Darya Fedosevna.—It was all owing to my simple nature! (AKHOV *goes out.*)

SCENE IX

DARYA FEDOSEVNA *and* AGNIA

Darya Fedosevna.—I really don't know whether I'm awake or not!

Agnia.—If you had only listened to him: he promised me just heaps of gold!

Darya Fedosevna.—He's a master hand at telling about heaps of gold, but he doesn't say anything about tears and how much his late wife cried!

Agnia.—No, he didn't mention a thing about that!

Darya Fedosevna.—Ah, that's a tale worth hearing! She didn't dare to cry at home, so she used to go to other people's houses to have her weep! She would rig herself up as if she were going visiting, but she would really drop into this person's house or that person's house to have a good cry! She used to come to see me, throw herself on the bed and cry her eyes out for three hours so that I couldn't bear to look at her. After that she would go away—just hello and good bye! It was just as if she had come on business! You've been working long enough!

Agnia.—I'm done! (*Covers her work and goes out.*) (IPPOLIT *comes in.*)

SCENE X

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, IPPOLIT; *later* MALANYA

Ippolit.—Didn't I get there and back quickly, ma'am? And yet I dropped into a tavern and carried off two pint bottles of cognac!

Darya Fedosevna.—What was that for?

Ippolit.—For courage, ma'am! What do you think about it? Does it show?

Darya Fedosevna.—Not a bit!

Ippolit.—Well, that's good! But my courage is high! I drank up as much as a half rouble of silver, but my boldness increased to the amount of ten roubles, if not more!

Darya Fedosevna.—Hired courage is not to be trusted!

Ippolit.—If you haven't enough of your own, you've got to buy more! If you'll allow me, I'll take a look at myself in the mirror. (*Prinks before the mirror.*) All right! Everything is in place. Good bye, ma'am! Perhaps something will go wrong with me, so don't bear me any ill will!

Darya Fedosevna.—Really, now, don't you stir up any mischief!

Ippolit.—No mischief! But it's impossible to live this way! Your daughter's recent words are right here! (*Slaps himself on the chest.*) Oh, yes! That reminds me! Keep this in the meantime! (*Hands out a thick packet.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—What's this? Money?

Ippolit.—Yes, ma'am!

Darya Fedosevna.—I won't take it, I won't take it! What's the matter with you? Maybe this is your master's!

Ippolit.—That's not your concern, ma'am! It belongs to me!

Darya Fedosevna.—A person will get into trouble with you yet!

Ippolit.—Goodness gracious, would I have the nerve to make anything unpleasant for you? I don't rely on myself, a drunken fellow, so I'm going to give it to you for safe-keeping for the space of one hour! But come right down to it, it's all the same to you whether it's mine or whether it's the master's!

Darya Fedosevna.—I won't take it!

Ippolit.—Ah, but you don't get my point! I'm going to leave the money at your house now and show myself at my master's. I'll make up a story and tell him that I lost it when I was drunk. What will he do with me?

Darya Fedosevna.—Uh huh! You've schemed out something! No, sir, don't you mix me up in it!

Ippolit.—You won't take it this way?

Darya Fedosevna.—Not for anything in the world!

Ippolit.—But if that's so, ma'am . . . (*In a loud voice.*) Malanya, the knife!

Darya Fedosevna.—What're you doing, what're you doing? (MALANYA *hands* IPPOLIT *a knife and then goes out.*)

Ippolit (*Takes the knife*).—It's all right! Don't you be afraid! (*Puts the knife into his side pocket.*) That's all, ma'am!

Darya Fedosevna.—You're up to something, I see!

Ippolit.—You've hit it, ma'am! Have you got a lucky hand?

Darya Fedosevna.—Yes!

Ippolit.—Then give it to me for luck! (*Takes* DARYA FEDOSEVNA's *hand.*) That's all! Good bye! (*Goes out.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—It wasn't fair for us to provoke him against his master just now! Such fellows aren't moderate—either he'll hold his peace even though you beat him or he'll carry on so that you'll have a peck o' trouble with him. There's a proverb that fits just such lads: "Make a fool bow in prayer and he'll be sure to break his head." (*Goes out.*)

ACT III

A small room in AKHOV's *house fixed up as a sort of study; solid, expensive furniture.*

SCENE I

FEONA *and* IPPOLIT

Feona.—Come right in, Apolit, come right in!

Ippolit.—I'm coming! Say, what's the master doing?

Feona.—He's still sleeping. But even if he weren't, he wouldn't eat you up.

Ippolit.—I know he wouldn't eat me up—you don't have to tell me that.

Feona (*Darting a glance at him*).—It's just as if you . . .

Ippolit.—Well, what?

Feona.—Weren't in your right mind!

Ippolit.—There's nothing surprising about that, 'cause I've been drinking.

Feona.—Heavens! That *is* something to brag of!

Ippolit.—Just you wait and see what I'm going to do!

Feona.—You won't surprise anybody, my friend. We've been expecting this from you for a long time!

Ippolit.—Well, now, what ever gave you a notion like that?

Feona.—'Cause you were getting so melancholy—well, it just wasn't natural!

Ippolit.—I was that way from love, from desperate love!

Feona.—But don't they take to drinking from love, especially if they are unsuccessful?

Ippolit.—*I* unsuccessful? Not if I know it! Because in this business I'm . . .

Feona.—Oh, you don't say so! Don't you bank on that too much! They lead better lads than you by the nose!

Ippolit.—I won't consider even for a moment talking this over with you!

Feona.—How can you talk it over with me? You've become so superior! What rank have they promoted you to, pray tell!

Ippolit.—I'm still in the same rank, but I'm not going to make any explanations of my love to anybody! Let that rest hidden in the depths of my heart! It's a mighty matter, I'd have you understand!

Feona.—Oh, yes! Some sort of princess, I suppose! I'm sure it's nothing less! Well, here's my guess: the rich folks keep company with the rich folks, and the clever folks keep company with the clever folks, but you fellows've just got to pick up the crumbs!

Ippolit.—Neither the rich girls nor the clever girls will escape me!

Feona.—How can they! Oh, they'll all be yours! You'll captivate 'em all! Only it's a misfortune that you're so weak in the upper story!

Ippolit.—You mean me?

Feona.—Yes, you!

Ippolit.—Well, I reckon I'm not the biggest blockhead in the world!

Feona.—Ho, what sense have you got? You're suppose to tend to business and here you go and keep your head chock full of love! All this mooning of yours won't lead to anything good—just to drunkenness. It's terrible how much of that stupidity there is left in you, Apolit, my boy: they teach you and teach you and still it doesn't leave you!

Ippolit.—Well, have I got the whole sermon or have you got some more preaching to do?

Feona.—Well, one might as well try to talk to the wind as to you for all the good it does! It's no use wagging one's tongue!

Ippolit.—What you say is just stuff and nonsense! What've you seen of the world? About a stone's throw around you! I know all the in's and out's of business. What understanding have you of life or of love? None at all! Have you got any education or any of these fine feelings? What *have* you got? Just force of habit, that's all! And yet you are advising me how to live—I, who have reached the full ripeness of years and everything!

Feona.—Think what you like!

Ippolit.—Oh, well—enough of this talk! Let's take a fresh start. Is uncle angry?

Feona.—No! Who can make him out, my friend? He's getting quite gay: he's always going about laughing!

Ippolit.—What a wonder!

Feona.—Yes, it is a wonder! Today he brought in upholsterers and tapestry hangers from town. He's taken a notion to make the whole house over new. He's trimmed his beard and put on a short coat.

Ippolit.—Do you suppose he's lost his senses? They're possessed of the devil in old age, folks say!

Feona.—He's got some fool notion in his head, only who can fathom him? He's a queer duck!

Ippolit.—Who wants to fathom him? Let him be as queer as he has a mind to. In the case of a clever man, you can understand everything he does, because he has a reason for everything; but if everything a man does depend on his miserable ignorance, he might just as well be asleep. Who can understand him? It's all the same to me now, whatever wonders he does!

Feona.—Why?

Ippolit.—It's an end to everything! Farewell forever!

Feona.—Why, you aren't really wanting to leave us?

Ippolit.—Even so, and my eyes will close on life and my heart will cease to beat!

Feona.—What are you talking about? There's no sense!

Ippolit (*Sorrowfully shaking his head*).—Black raven, why dost thou hover over my head!

Feona.—Good heavens! Are you in your right mind?

Ippolit.—It's an end to everything. Farewell forever!

Feona.—Ah, Ippie, Ippie, you're a good lad, but why do you put on such airs? Why do you say such senseless words and put on such a melodramatic manner?

Ippolit.—This is way beyond your comprehension. There are some people who are dull and hardened; there are others who, in their ideas and feelings, long to be higher.

Feona.—But here you've broken away from the stupid folks but you haven't caught up with the clever folks, so you're out in the cold!

Ippolit.—Well, let it go at that! When uncle wakes, you let me know. It's an end to everything! Farewell forever! (*Goes out.*)

Scene II

Feona, *later* Akhov

Feona.—Grisha is off his head, this one is on the way there, and the old man is storming around! He's dressing up and refurnishing the house, and today or tomorrow, for all you know, he may begin to crow like a cock or bark like a dog! This is a charming household! Chain 'em up in different rooms and walk around and admire 'em! At least we'll have our own menagerie at home! We can show 'em off for money! (*The voice of* Akhov: "Feona!") The darling has waked up! (*The voice of* Akhov: "Feona, *are you there*?") Oh, I suppose he's gone and lost himself again! Here! (Akhov *enters.*)

Akhov.—What're you doing here?

Feona.—The only thing I have to do: sitting and looking at an empty corner!

Akhov.—Oh, I'll find something else for you!

Feona.—I wish you would—a person gets so stupid!

Akhov.—Do this right off! Just set your legs in motion and take this here present to Darya Fedosevna and say, "Ermil Zotych bids me give you this as an acknowledgement of your kindness." Hear that? You're to say it just like that: "as an acknowledgement of your kindness." Now how are you to say it, old woman?

Feona.—Baby! I guess it's not such an oration! I can manage to say it all right!

Akhov.—And supposing they accept it carelesslike—then you make 'em examine it well!

Feona.—Oh, we'll examine it, we'll examine it! Just give it to me!

Akhov (*Hands her a box*).—Give it to 'em in good shape so that they'll feel that it's worth money!

Feona.—Oh, of course!

Akhov.—It's worth thousands! Just you tell 'em this: "You yourselves aren't worth as much as the present he's giving you!"

Feona.—Yes, sir, certainly!

Akhov.—Tell 'em that they might appreciate it! It may be that they won't value it, so you can explain to 'em that here I've bought it and squandered a great deal of money so that they'd know . . . that I might have given 'em some kind of old trash and they'd have been quite satisfied, but that here I've . . . Well, they needn't bow clear to your feet, but they ought to have some kind of appreciation and they ought to think that somebody has given 'em "something we don't deserve." You understand? So that I may not throw my money away for nothing, so that I'll see by their faces that I'm favoring 'em to an unheard of degree! But I do grudge the money if they just take it carelessly! Maybe they'll appreciate it in their hearts, but if they don't make a show of it, then it isn't any use at all. I just want to see that they understand that they are worthless people—that I can just give to whomsoever I please without consulting anybody!

Feona.—Yes, I understand, I understand!

Akhov.—But if they begin asking you about me, trying to sound you out, you fix up everything for the best and praise me up and say that I'm awfully kind. But if they want to know anything about the family, then say that it all comes from the children—that they were born robbers and that in character they didn't take after their father but after their poor dead mother!

Feona.—Yes, but they don't take after their mother!

Akhov.—Whose bread do you eat? How dare you have a mind of your own? If I give you an order, oughtn't you to carry it out?

Feona.—Oh, very well!

Ahkov.—Huh! That's all! Now get along with you!

Feona.—Our Apolit has gone wrong!

Akhov.—Who cares? Let him! Why do you mention him to me when I don't ask you? Supposing I don't want to think about him? I don't need him at all now. If I close up all my affairs and turn the factory over to my partner, what use have I got for Ippolit? I'll drive him out, and there's an end to it! Does he think that I'll have very much to say to him? He's a grand bird, this Ippolit of yours! He's quite indispensable to me! You tend to your own business as you're told, but don't go trying to discuss with your master things he doesn't ask you about. It's so interesting to me! I can turn you out with all your talk! Get along!

Feona.—I'm off!

Akhov.—Hold on! Now you listen! If they ask you, you recommend me so that I'm the nicest man in the world!

Feona.—I'll do that! (*Goes out.*)

Akhov.—I'll get rid of Ippolit in a hurry! Why should I be obliged to keep such jumping-jacks in my home? The scamps! They're awfully slick with the dames! And he doesn't talk with young women and girls the way he does with other people. His tongue is just like a noose. He catches 'em with it, and lashes 'em with it, the rogue! But it tickles the women, and they grin and grin at the foolish yarns he tells 'em. I'll not allow Ippolit to come near my yard. For they, crazy idiots, don't know their benefactors and they don't care about 'em. And then, he's only a distant kinsman—some sixteenth cousin or worse. If she were simply a mistress to him, he wouldn't dare to come near again. But it will be "auntie" this and "auntie" that. When you look at 'em, it'll be enough to drive you into consumption. No, it's got to stop! Off the premises with him! (IPPOLIT *comes in.*)

SCENE III

AKHOV *and* IPPOLIT

Akhov.—What're you doing here?

Ippolit.—I've come in to see you, uncle!

Akhov.—How dare you come in when I didn't call you?

Ippolit.—It happens that I needed to . . .

Akhov (*Sternly*).—But I don't need to, so get along with you!

Ippolit.—Nevertheless, I want to . . .

Akhov.—Be off, I tell you!

Ippolit.—But permit me, sir! As long as I've come in . . .

Akhov.—As long as you've come in, you can get out!

Ippolit.—I didn't come merely . . . but on purpose . . .

Akhov.—How long are you going to keep talking? Know where you belong—in the office! How dare you intrude on your master? Haven't I got any business besides you? I've seen your face once today and that's quite enough for me! So be off without a word!

Ippolit.—No, you've got to drop that! As long as I've come in, I won't get out!

Akhov.—Then I'll sling you out by the hair!

Ippolit.—No, you aren't going to sling me out by the hair! I won't let you touch a finger to me!

Akhov.—What's this! You're going to mutiny!

Ippolit.—Supposing I do mutiny! The principal reason is that there's law and right about this now!

Akhov.—What kind of law is there written for you, fool? Who is obliged to frame laws for you—for mere rubbish! What kind of rights have you got when you're only a kid and aren't worth a penny! You've got a pretty big opinion of yourself! The laws are framed, but you think it's on your account! You're a small fish to have laws written for you! You'll have the law shown you! The only law for you is your master's will, especially when you're a relative! You came in to have a talk, my dear? Well, speak out, speak out! I'm listening! Only don't blame me if afterwards it leaves a bad taste in your mouth! What do you want!

Ippolit.—I'm here in regard to my salary!

Akhov.—In regard to what salary? What kind of agreement have you been living under?

Ippolit.—Who is such an enemy to himself nowadays as to be willing to work for nothing?

Akhov.—Don't work, then—nobody is holding you! I'd suggest that it'd be more becoming for you to take yourself off before they send you flying bag and baggage!

Ippolit.—And so I've lived to no purpose?

Akhov.—Were you living for money? You were here as a relative!

Ippolit.—But I worked, didn't I?

Akhov.—Most certainly you worked! Did you expect to lie on the stove? You served me as a relative and I helped you out as a relative as far as my kindness extended to you. What more do you want?

Ippolit.—But for the future I'm not content to live in such a position!

Akhov.—And for the future I haven't any need for you. To-morrow settle your account and get out!

Ippolit.—After all my slaving, I'm obliged to hear you tell me to get out! Is that all?

Akhov.—If you don't want to get out, then wait until they drive you out with brooms. You can take your own choice!

Ippolit.—But the salary?

Akhov.—Well, I'm still considering that! What's this salary for? For rudeness? Your beloved uncle is asking you to get out and you don't go. Do you get a reward for that?

Ippolit.—Anyhow, you promised!

Akhov.—I promised to bestow something, but now I've thought better of it. Have you stolen but little, that you are asking for a salary?

Ippolit.—I'm not given to that sort of thing and I don't care for any sermons!

Akhov.—I've committed myself to talk to you, but talking is very distasteful to me. Either you're a dunce or else you're fooling me. Don't you know the Russian proverb, "Steal, but cover up your tracks"? Don't you know it? I'll believe you, all right! But really, now, if you, living at my house, haven't earned anything, whose fault is it? You're all worth the same price, my friend—don't you sing the beggar's song to me. I'm really not much touched by your honesty, my friend, because you don't convince me of it by anything! Why do your masters give you fellows such small salaries? Because, however much they give you, you'll keep on stealing—and so your master had better make something out of you on salary at any rate! But they keep coaxing you fools with rewards so that you'll have a little bit of conscience and will rob less!

Ippolit.—Meaning, uncle, that you yourself are cheating other folks and wish other folks to cheat you? It's a pity you spoke so late! You see I went by completely different rules and I'm kind of figuring, therefore, on getting at least fifteen thousand from you!

Akhov.—Oh, make it more, make it more! You might just as well! Nary a copper kopek I'll give you, my darling! What kind of fool do you think I am?

Ippolit.—In return for all my service, that's the kind of reward I get from you?

Akhov.—What's all this silly talk? Your words will never amaze me!

Ippolit.—I'll prove to you, not by words but by an action how much more noble I am than you! (*Hands the money to* Akhov.)

Akhov.—You collected this from the promissory notes?

Ippolit.—Yes, sir!

Akhov.—Well, how do you get nobility out of that, when it's your *duty!*

Ippolit.—It's your duty to pay me for my services, but you don't pay! All right, and I have the same privilege! I might have hidden the money and told you that I lost it when I was drunk!

Akhov.—You're daft; aren't you?

Ippolit.—I've thought the matter over. It's nothing terrible. Maybe I have even consulted with lawyers! "Act," they say, "and we'll set things right." But don't you disturb yourself! I straightway made up my mind that this wasn't the proper time for me to get the money. But all is corruption. I don't need anything from you now. If you force it on me, I'll not take it. There's just one thing working in me now—despair! I was a man and now I've become dust, and so what use is money? A fellow can't take it there with him!

Akhov.—It's true you can't take it! Only if I tie you up now, I think it will be a more sensible arrangement!

Ippolit.—It's pretty late to bind me now!

Akhov.—No, I think it's the very time!

Ippolit.—You're wrong about that!

Akhov.—Really? What'll you do?

Ippolit (*Drawing the knife from his pocket*).—Here you are right now! One . . . (*Points to his own throat.*) Zip! And I'm dust!

Akhov (*In fright*).—What're you doing, rogue? What're you doing, what're you doing? (*Stamps in one spot with his feet.*)

Ippolit.—My eyes will close forever and my heart will cease to beat!

Akhov.—Stop it, I tell you, stop it! (*Stamps*)

Ippolit.—How can you scare me, uncle, when I'm sick of life myself? My hope has died and my love has ceased—that means an end to everything! Ha, ha, ha! I now offer up my life just so that folks will know what a tyrant you are to your own kinsfolk.

Akhov.—Here . . . but I'll send the servants for the police!

Ippolit.—It can't be done! If you stir from the spot or—just one word out of you and that quick I'll—zip! And that's the end!

Akhov.—What're you doing with me, robber? Ippolit, listen! You listen to me! Just go for a stroll. Maybe the fresh air will be good for you. (*To himself.*) Get him out of the house and then let him hack himself up to his heart's content!

Ippolit.—No, uncle! You've got to stop these jokes! I'm in dead earnest with you!

Akhov.—In dead earnest?

Ippolit.—In dead earnest!

Akhov.—Well, if you're in earnest, let's talk in earnest. I thought you were joking!

Ippolit.—But it happens that I'm in no laughing mood when the steel trembles in my hand!

Akhov.—What do you want from me?

Ippolit.—Do the right thing and pay me my wages.

Akhov.—Do the right thing! Who knows what the right thing is for you? Talk sense!

Ippolit.—Well, here's the whole sense! (*Takes a paper from his pocket.*) Sign!

Akhov.—What do you call this paper? What's it for?

Ippolit.—It's a certificate.

Akhov.—What sort of certificate?

Ippolit.—Like this: I, living at your house as a clerk, learned the business in detail and conducted myself honestly and honorably—even more than was required!

Akhov.—All that is written there?

Ippolit.—It's all written there. And I received a salary of two thousand a year.

Akhov.—When was this?

Ippolit.—Oh, that's just for the looks of it. If I go to another place . . .

Akhov.—Yes? To deceive people? Well, let it pass! It doesn't matter—it's possible!

Ippolit.—And at the end, in return for all my zeal beyond measure, I received a reward of fifteen thousand . . .

Akhov.—Also for the looks of the thing?

Ippolit.—No, this is in reality!

Akhov.—What is in reality? Five hundred roubles, I suppose, for your good looks?

Ippolit.—No, all of it, in full measure!

Akhov.—Why, my friend, this is fiddlesticks!

Ippolit.—If you start your balking again, then here it is—here goes! (*Shows the knife.*) Just as quick as that—zip! and it's the end!

Akhov.—Why do you keep saying "Zip, zip" all the time? You make me tired!

Ippolit.—Despair!

Akhov.—Take a thousand rubles and say done! Give it here to me to sign,.

Ippolit.—If my life is not dear to me, will it become dearer because of a thousand rubles? I'm tired of living, I'll have you know. It's quite impossible for me now to take less than fifteen thousand in order to come again to my natural senses, because I'll have to cheer myself up in all kinds of ways!

Akhov.—Well, we'll split the difference! Give me your hand!

Ippolit.—A single kopek short of fifteen thousand, and I won't take it!

Akhov.—Such a mint o' money! What's it for?

Ippolit.—For ten years! You'd pay more to a stranger!

Akhov.—Of course I'd pay more, but not all at once. It hurts me to do it all at once. Can't you understand, can't you understand?

Ippolit.—Excuse me, uncle! I'm not myself now and I can't understand anything!

Akhov.—Well, take half now and the rest tomorrow! It's hard on me all at once! Understand?

Ippolit.—I tell you I'm not in the mood to understand anything! You've got to dig it all up right now!

Akhov.—Well, what's to be done with you? Give me the paper! (IPPOLIT *hands him the paper*, AKHOV *signs.*) Take the money! Only appreciate this! (*Counts out from the money brought by* IPPOLIT.)

Ippolit (*Takes the money and the paper*).—I thank you humbly!

Akhov.—Thank me nicely!

Ippolit.—Most tender thanks to you!

Akhov.—Bow down to my feet, friend!

Ippolit.—What's that for?

Akhov.—Aw, go ahead and bow—humor an old man! You've done me such an injury, you know, and you did give me such a pain! But make me a nice bow and everything will be easier for me!

Ippolit.—To bow down in return for my own rights? Who ever heard of such a thing?

Akhov.—Oh, I beg of you to show me this honor. I don't think your back will break!

Ippolit.—No, truly, uncle, I begin to feel something. Most likely rain's coming, my bones ache so! I can't bend over!

Akhov.—Rascal, you rascal, you're just lying! It'll be the worse for you! You won't find happiness in anything if you don't bow to your relatives!

Ippolit.—Well, it'll be my own fault, and I'll weep my own tears!

Akhov.—You will, you will, all right! This stubbornness of yours is harder for me than even the fifteen thousand!

Ippolit.—What's to be done, uncle? I don't enjoy this myself, but I simply can't do so because—rain's coming, you know.

Akhov.—Well, just tell me, now! What're you planning on doing with this money? Of course you'll only scatter it to the winds and squander it.

Ippolit.—You're very much mistaken! I want to get married!

Akhov.—Not a bad plan! Only of course they won't marry a nice girl to you! Maybe they will for my sake, though, because your uncle is famous everywhere!

Ippolit.—Most likely they will for your sake!

Akhov.—Where do you reckon you'll go a-courting?

Ippolit.—So as not to go far: right here in the neighborhood!

Akhov.—There's nobody around here!

Ippolit.—If you look carefully, you'll find somebody. Agnia Kruglov, for instance: there's a terrible nice girl for you!

Akhov.—Ah, you wretch! Whose permission did you get?

Ippolit.—Why do I have to get permission at all when I'm my own master?

Akhov.—But she isn't her own mistress! Oh, you wretch! (Feona *comes in.*)

SCENE IV

AKHOV, IPPOLIT *and* FEONA

Akhov.—Well, what is it now?

Feona.—They accepted it and said to thank you.

Akhov.—They were pleased, naturally?

Feona.—I should say so! It cost money, you know. You just ought to go over and see how they'll fall on your neck. Little Agnia is fairly skipping around like a goat!

Ippolit (*To* FEONA).—What's the idea of that kind of exercise?

Feona.—You'd be skipping around too if Ermil Zotych made you a gift worth five thousand!

Ippolit.—If they've gone in for money, it's no use talking: I'm done for!

Akhov (*To* FEONA).—Get my hat!

Feona (*Handing him his hat*).—You're not done for, but you're off in the head!

Akhov (*To* IPPOLIT).—Get your cap and come along. I'm going to show you your whole lump of stupidity as plain as day.

Ippolit.—Uncle! But where are you going to take me to?

Akhov.—To Darya Fedosevna's.

Ippolit.—That means to a cruel punishment! It'd be far better for you to kill me right here, but don't put me to shame!

Akhov (*Seizing him by the hand*).—No, come along here, come along! ((*All go out.*)

ACT IV

The same setting as in Act I

SCENE I

DARYA FEDOSEVNA *and* AGNIA *come in from the other room*

Darya Fedosevna.—Just the same, this affair has got serious! He's playing with such stakes—it doesn't smell like a joke any longer!

Agnia.—There's not much time for thinking. We've go to decide right straight away!

Darya Fedosevna.—It's easy to say—decide! But this is for your whole life. Well, if we let this chance slip by, then there's no happiness before *you* and that'd be torture for me and I'd hear abuse from folks. They say there's no happiness in money. Oh, is that so! Just the same, it's clear that there're few happy without it! But just think: how can I give you into torture! Maybe some other person would have doubt about it. "Maybe," she'd say, "it'll be good for her to marry him. Maybe he'll change with a young wife." But I haven't any such doubt. I know beforehand that I'm giving you into certain torture. What'll we do about it, Agna dear?

Agnia.—How should I know? What have I seen of the world?

Darya Fedosevna.—But this is your affair. What does your little heart tell you?

Agnia.—Yes, my little heart! What's it good for? For pranks! But it's just the same old story: here's either happiness or sorrow for my whole life! I feel as if some misfortune were going to happen. I don't know where my heart has hid itself or where to look for it now. No, mamma, it's quite clear that besides a heart one needs a brain. But where can I lay hold of one?

Darya Fedosevna.—Oh, I have a little of that!

Agnia.—That's just it, mamma! I never have caressed you, never showed my love to you. So now I will really prove it to you! Whatever you do will be fine!

Darya Fedosevna.—What's ailing you, daughter? Won't you tell me everything?

Agnia.—What have I got to tell? I'd just be confusing you. You've lived more and know more.

Darya Fedosevna.—But won't you scold your mother afterwards?

Agnia.—Nary a word you'll hear!

Darya Fedosevna.—Oh, you, my precious darling! Here's what I have to say to you: before I came here I prayed in my bedroom all by myself to prepare for whatever might happen. And now that I've prayed, I'll think it over.

Agnia.—Think it over, think it over, but I'll just wait.

Darya Fedosevna.—Why should you wait a long time and torture yourself to no purpose?

Agnia.—Wait a bit, wait a bit, I'll shut my eyes! (*Shuts her eyes.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—Although the whole world blame me, this is my opinion: killing will be too good for me if I marry you to him!

Agnia.—Oh, now my heart feels easy!

Darya Fedosevna.—Because I have suffered no little myself; and again—what a difference between marrying an old man and a young one! It's one thing to . . .

Agnia.—Oh, enough, enough! I know already what you're going to say! (*Kisses her mother.*)

Darya Fedosevna.—Just the same, I'm glad that he . . . I'll just have a good laugh over it. (MALANYA *enters.*)

SCENE II

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA *and* MALANYA

Malanya.—A grey-haired old man, and along with him a . . . Oh, dear, what's his name?—a blond young fellow.

Agnia.—He wasn't a brunette?

Malanya.—That's it, quite a brunette!

Darya Fedosevna.—Who is it? It can't be Ippolit!

Malanya.—Yes, that's who it is—he's the fellow. All at once I . . . I got sort of hazy!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well of all things! Together?

Agnia.—We'll soon find out! (MALANYA *goes out;* AKHOV *and* IPPOLIT *come in.*)

SCENE III

DARYA FEDOSEVNA, AGNIA, AKHOV *and* IPPOLIT

Akhov (*Bowing decorously*).—Good evening, and again good evening!

Darya Fedosevna.—Come right in, come right in!

Akhov.—Did you get it?

Darya Fedosevna.—We thank you humbly, Ermil Zotych! (AGNIA *bows in silence.*) We thank you most humbly! You were terribly generous! But for folks like us it was pretty costly, I should say. (*Bows*) It wasn't right for you to go to such expense!

Akhov (*Much gratified*).—He, he, he! What do you mean by saying it wasn't right!

Darya Fedosevna.—You had to pay right dearly, didn't you?

Akhov.—Why are you singing that tune to me? It might be dear for some people, but it ain't for me! I didn't break myself up—I didn't give you a stone house, you know! I sent you some old rubbish and all of a sudden you complain because it's costly!

Darya Fedosevna.—But if it's rubbish for you, so much the better for us! We won't have so many scruples about accepting it from you!

Akhov.—So you've thought up some scruples! You make me laugh! (*Pointing to* Ippolit.) There now, don't you ever complain that I drove him out a little while ago. I brought him here myself!

Darya Fedosevna.—We thank you humbly! Pray be seated!

Akhov.—He has become a man of affairs now. He has his own capital!

Darya Fedosevna.—It's about time!

Akhov.—What do you think about him, eh? You supposed, like all good people, that he was an urchin and didn't deserve any attention? No, you give him a higher position!

Darya Fedosevna.—Stop talking! What's the use?

Akhov.—And now why did I bring him with me? 'Cause it's tiresome without fools! In the good old times, they used to have buffoons, but they're out of date now. Well, let *him* amuse us instead of a buffoon! But if he doesn't like to do this kind of duty, why did he come along? Who keeps him here?

Ippolit.—I've nowhere to go, sir! It's nothing new to have you insult me. But now I'm just waiting until the mistresses of this house pronounce me entirely a fool as a last touch to my misery.

Akhov.—There, do you hear? If you wanted to laugh, I couldn't do so well myself! He's got a notion to get married. Darya Fedosevna, you haven't got a girl that you want to get a husband for, have you?

Darya Fedosevna.—I have one such—no other.

Akhov.—Hadn't we better make 'em sit down side by side?

Darya Fedosevna.—Why not?

Ippolit.—Oh, gracious goodness, sir, why such mockery?

Agnia (*Gently*).—Sit down! Never you mind about it! (*They sit down side by side.*)

Akhov.—Aren't they a cute little pair?

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, aren't they, now?

Akhov (*To* Ippolit).—Did you have a little sit with your sweetheart? Well, that's enough! You'd better do the proper thing!

Ippolit.—How so, sir?

Akhov.—Because this sweetheart is far too nice for you. It's too much of a good thing!

Ippolit.—No, sir, it's not too much. Judging by my feelings, it's just right!

Akhov.—But you ask her first! Hasn't she got any other suitor better'n you? (*To* AGNIA.) Speak! Don't be bashful!

Agnia.—It's just as mamma likes!

Akhov.—What has mamma got to do with it? The old woman is overjoyed from happiness, of course!

Darya Fedosevna.—I don't know what you're talking about, Ermil Zotych!

Akhov.—How's that? You don't know? Drop the mask, drop the mask! (*Pointing to* IPPOLIT) You're ashamed of him, eh? Well, he's his own boss. Whether he's here or whether he's not, it's all the same thing—judging by his worthlessness! Drop the mask! You've been longing to bow down to my feet for a long time and still you don't so much as stir!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why shouldn't I bow down? But again, why should I? For what kindness on your part?

Akhov (*Angrily*).—Your jokes are untimely and out of place. Or have you lost your senses from joy? I'm too old to have people make jokes of me!

Darya Fedosevna.—But I'm not joking!

Akhov.—If you're waiting for a bow from me, don't expect it. Why are you standing there like a booby? You've got no head to your house. There's nobody to jog you up a bit to make you hurry around more lively. If your husband had been alive, ages ago you would have scrambled around the house like a cat with its tail cut off. Why do you hesitate? If you're ashamed to bow, then don't bow, but anyhow give me your blessing as is proper. If you'll hold the ikon up in your hands, I'll bow to you.* You'll get that honor from me!

Darya Fedosevna.—It's easy to bless people, but just ask whether my hands will ever be raised to do it. This is how I've figured it out, Ermil Zotych: if you give me your promise that you'll die within a week after the wedding, even then I'll have to think twice before marrying my daughter to you!

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* To receive her blessing as her son-in-law.—*Translators.*

Akhov.—What has struck you? Beggars, beggars! Just think a bit! For just let me get angry and leave you, and afterwards you'll begin wiping your tears on your fist! Don't stir my anger!

Darya Fedosevna.—Get angry or don't get angry—just as you choose!

Akhov.—Say, what's the matter with you? Isn't this some kind of miracle? A million dollars didn't fall from heaven on you, I suppose? Haven't you got a suitor richer than I am? It looks that way!

Darya Fedosevna.—No, it doesn't look that way! We've got no suitors at all. There is one lad in view, to be sure, only there's no way for him to rise in the world, poor fellow. If he had a business he could depend upon, I would give her to him without hesitation.

Ippolit (*Giving the money to* DARYA FEDOSEVNA).—Just permit me to leave it with you for safekeeping. I received it today in a lump for all my services. Now I can set up my own business.

Darya Fedosevna.—What could be nicer? This is a great deal!

Ippolit.—It's fifteen thousand to a kopek!

Agnia.—Now we can be reconciled to you!

Akhov.—So you think you're going to feast on such money! You're building air castles with that money! That money's just as good as stolen! He got it out of me today by whining and bowing!

Ippolit.—I didn't bow! I just demanded what was due for my services!

Akhov.—Well, you would not be among the living! I saved you from a needless death. I see that if a man wants to kill himself . . .

Ippolit.—Gracious, uncle, what's the matter with you? How could I kill myself?

Akhov.—You would have cut your throat. You stood there like a man with the plague and you scared me to death, you did!

Ippolit.—Oh, come, now, uncle! How could I make up my mind to kill myself in the bloom of youth?

Akhov.—But why did you have the knife? Why did you press it to your throat?

Ippolit.—Oh, I just took a notion!

Akhov.—Robber! (*Starts to seize him by the collar.*)

Ippolit (*Dodging him*).—Permit me, sir! How am I a robber? *I* haven't anybody else's kopeks! And is it my fault that nobody can get anything out of you by gentle means?

Akhov.—You won't be happy, you won't be happy!

Ippolit.—Well, what's to be done about it? Somehow or other we'll have sense enough to get along without happiness, uncle!

Akhov.—You won't get along, you won't get along! You haven't got any father or any mother! I'm your guardian and I'll curse you! It'll be handed down to your grandsons and great grandsons!

Darya Fedosevna.—Stop it! Why do you anger God?

Akhov (*To* AGNIA).—Renounce him! What good is there in him? Your mother's a fool. She can't explain to you. I'm better than he is! I'm good and kind! What is money to me? It'll just be for finery for you! And such a splendid house as I have! It's stone, and it's big and strong!

Agnia.—A prison is strong, but who'd enjoy it?

Akhov.—You, too, take after your mother, I see! You have just about as much sense as she has! (*To* DARYA FEDOSEVNA *through his tears.*) Fedosevna, you take pity on me! For I'm an orphan and I'm bewildered in such a house alone! I even get afraid!

Darya Fedosevna.—Why pity you? You can always find yourself company with your money if you have a mind to!

Akhov.—Find company! Thanks for the suggestion! I know that I'll find it! If I'm no match for her, I'll find another handsomer than she is! You think, I suppose, that I'm really in love? Fudge! One thing grieves me, one thing hurts me—your stubbornness! For I'm an honorable man, a first rate man, and everybody bows low to me. But in such a hut as this there's no respect for me! For me! From you! Stubbornness!! It's enough to make a hen laugh! Did you ever see such a thing before? Did you ever hear of it? Have you acted well? Well? Come back to your senses! Give your head a good shaking up! For you do this from stupidity—not from reason! It's all exactly the same as if you were living in a forest and never went into the world. If a fellow like me—a man of mark—comes into such a hovel, then he ought to be made to feel at home there. Otherwise what's the use of his going there. And the master of the place, like a servant, must say: "What would you like? What will you order?" That's how it has been established since the beginning of the world. That's the way it's done by all good people in the world. It's just all the same as the law. But you uncultivated fools have turned barbarians living here. (*To* DARYA FEDOSEVNA) And it's no use getting angry at you and there's nothing to be expected of you, because you don't know how decent people behave. How do you live? From hand to mouth, happy-go-lucky! It's all the same to you whether he's a rich man, a poor man, a manufacturer or an idler! Ignorance! You have one argument, one line of talk for everybody! But just see what refinement means! Yesterday a noblewoman came to me to beg for help in her poverty. So she played on her tongue as if it were a guitar. She called me "Your Excellency" and she moved me to tears! But how about you? A blockhead! I can't expect anything of you! Well, it's all my own fault! If you only knew what respect, what kind of honor . . .

Darya Fedosevna.—Of course I know what honor is!

Akhov.—Oh, yes! It's quite evident that you know it! You did have honor, but it departed! I paid you honor by visiting you! And you found it brighter in your rooms just because I was there. You would have honor if your daughter were the wife of Akhov, the merchant! That'd be an honor for you! If I forsake you, you'll live in obscurity again. And you'll not find out what honor is like your whole life!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, you've sung your little song long enough. Now you listen to me! You want to be my guest, so sit down and don't disturb me! Don't spoil our humble innocent joy with your rich mind!

Akhov.—Don't you think you've forgotten yourself? Want to be your guest, indeed! What kind of company are you for me! I'll tell 'em not to let such people as you farther than the gates of my house. A guest, indeed! You aren't able to live with good folks, so thank yourself for it. Your elbow is very close, but you can't bite it! (*Goes into the entrance hall and then immediately returns.*) But no, stay! You've fairly made a fool of me! How can I look people in the face now? What will nice folks say of me?

Darya Fedosevna.—That's not for us to cry over, Ermil Zotych, my dear fellow!

Akhov.—No! It's all your own fault, and you've got to set the matter right!

Darya Fedosevna.—I wouldn't do an earthly thing for you, Ermil Zotych, my dear fellow! That's the sort of good opinion I have of you!

Akhov.—But not for nothing! For money—for big money! You'll get dizzy from it!

Darya Fedosevna.—What're you up to now? What fancy stunt will it be next?

Akhov.—I don't want to talk with them! I despise them! They are less than the heel of my boot, that's what they are! But I'll condescend to have a little chat with you. Now of course you need to get her a dowry? You can't marry her off in the clothes she has on, can you? Is a dowry necessary?

Darya Fedosevna.—Of course it's necessary! Most certainly it's necessary!

Akhov.—Well, now, you listen! In order to stop the gossip that you ignorant people have blacked my eye for me, we'll cook up a story that it is *I* who is marrying off Ippolit!

Darya Fedosevna.—Well, that'll be all right!

Akhov.—After the wedding we'll have such a dinner at my house as was never heard of! And I'll strip Fomin and all the rest of 'em of their flowers, and we'll fix up all the rooms! Two bands, one in the house and the other on the balcony for the spectators! Butlers in low shoes! Great effect, eh?

Darya Fedosevna.—Great effect!

Akhov.—After everything else, reward for Ippolit beyond measure. If you don't trust me, then I'll deposit it with a friend of ours, and I'll make an advance payment to you for the dowry, . . .

Darya Fedosevna.—And what further?

Akhov.—Here's the kind of bargain it is: The bridegroom and the bride—then they'll come from the church with a team of six grey horses. When they get to the gates—stop! They must not drive in through the gates, but straightway a porter will give each of 'em a broom and with the broom they must sweep their way to the staircase. Don't you be afraid—it'll be clean! They'll have it all swept up before the bride and groom get there! Just let 'em do it for show! But I'll stand on the balcony with the guests and then I'll forgive you and promote you to honor, and you'll be among all the guests at my house as an equal!

Darya Fedosevna.—If you loaded me with gold from top to toe, I wouldn't give my daughter into disgrace!

Akhov.—You wouldn't give her!

Darya Fedosevna.—No, sir!

Akhov.—Well, so scum remains scum! Curses on you now and forever! How are you going to live, how are you going to live? People don't set any value on kin. They even dare to affront wealth. Uncle says, "Bow down as a kinsman should." "I don't want to!" "Well, then, you pauper, bow down if it's only for money!" "I don't want to!" It's better to die right straight off! Oh, well, it doesn't matter! The world can't last long with manners like these! But how did the fathers live? What became of them, those customs old and well established? Has corruption spread over the world? Yet possibly there was still more of it in olden times. Is some demon walking among men and destroying their reason? Why is it that you don't lie at my feet as of old? Why do I stand reviled before you when it's no fault of mine at all?

Darya Fedosevna.—Because, Ermil Zotych, as the Russian proverb says, "A Cat Has Not Always Carnival: she has her Lent also!" (*Embraces* Ippolit *and* Agnia.)

Curtain

WILLIAM HAZLITT: MAN AND CRITIC

By Charles A. Madison

I

Macaulay, Ruskin, Dickens, Thackeray, Bagehot, Stevenson, and Henley are only the more distinguished of the men of letters who have acknowledged William Hazlitt as their teacher and peer. Moreover, his admirers are not alone in placing him among the foremost of English critics and essayists. Nevertheless, he has few readers: the distorted picture drawn by his adverse critics during the heat of political controversy has frightened the English reader away from Hazlitt's undeniably excellent writings. Why, truly, has he been decried as an obstinate fanatic, a quarrelsome, cantankerous fellow—unworthy of the attention paid to the more respectable of his contemporaries? Why has his reputation remained until recently in the shadow of obscurity?

The answer may be made that Hazlitt is a victim more of his peculiar character than of unmerited calumny. The truth of the matter is that Hazlitt is a fine example of romantic paradox. A true sentimentalist, he despised sentiment in others; the two authors who influenced him most are Rousseau and Burke. He hated kings and admired Napoleon, loved liberty and equality and scorned the mob. He attacked "good nature" with Rousseauan vehemence, and prided himself on his outspokenness and on his being a "good hater"; yet of all men he befriended most the gentle Charles Lamb. One of the best fighters in English literature, he was a very timid man amongst men. Himself an extreme Jacobin, he never neglected an opportunity to voice his distrust of all radicals. Sometimes appraised a misogynist, his affair with Sarah Walker is one of the few nympholeptic eruptions on record; and though the sight of a pretty woman frequently resulted in an infatuation, both of his marriages were contracted when his heart was most free. Exaggerated as these paradoxical traits appear taken together, they were merely symptomatic of his generation and deserved censure no more than those of Byron and Wordsworth and Shelley. Hazlitt gained his ill repute for political reasons: the followers of Pitt singled him out for their concentrated opprobrium because his attacks on Legitimacy were most devastating.

Hereditary influences tended to emphasize Hazlitt's love of liberty. His grandfather and father were both sturdy non-conformists. He himself was destined for the Unitarian ministry. His father taught him early to distinguish between right and wrong, liberty and tyranny, justice and iniquity, good and evil. Compromise and hypocrisy he was warned to shun especially. How effective these teachings were may be seen from the following instances. When only twelve years old, while on a visit, he wrote to his father: "I had rather people would tell me to go out of the house than to ask me to stay, and at the same time, be trembling all over, for fear one should take a slice of meat, or a dish of tea, with them." A year later, learning of the ill-treatment of Doctor Priestley at the hands of a Birmingham mob, he wrote a long letter to the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* in defence of this friend of his father, saying in part: "Ah! Christianity, how thou art debased! How am I grieved to see that universal benevolence, that love to all mankind, that love even to our enemies, and that compassion for the failings of our fellow-men that thou contracted to promote, contracted and shrunk up within the narrow limits that prejudice and bigotry mark out . . . Violence and force can never promote the love of truth, but reason and argument or love, and whenever these fail, all other means are vain and ineffectual." The grave attitude to life of this thirteen-year-old boy appeared the more accentuated in the mature man.

With the blood of the non-conformist quickening his pulse, and with the echo of religious faith fast dying away in his heart, he listened the more eagerly to the Jacobin teachings of his older brother John. The spirit of the French Revolution that lifted the youth of England to the topmost cloud only the more to disillusion them, dealt more gently with the mettlesome Hazlitt. While up on high he saw "the evening star set over a poor man's cottage, and connected it with the hope of human happiness." This vision fixed itself in his imagination and stimulated his political thinking to the last; and he guarded it with the solicitude and spleen of a brooding hen.

That is why Hazlitt hated most heartily and most constantly what in his time was termed Legitimacy. This hatred in part justifies Leslie Stephen's disparaging remark about Hazlitt being at fifty what he was at fifteen. To the fervent youth aglow with the spirit of revolt, it was only natural to take the side of liberty; to the man of fifty it was no less natural. "The question with me is," he writes in his mature years, "whether I and all mankind are born slaves or free." His own answer is that wherever kings prevail liberty languishes, and for the following reason: "The power of an arbitrary king or an aspiring minister does not increase with the liberty of the subject, but must be circumscribed by it. It is aggrandized by perpetual, systematic, insidious or violent encroachments on popular freedom and natural right, as the sea gains upon the land by swallowing it up . . . They who get wealth and power from the people, who drive them like cattle to slaughter or to market, and levy cruel wars, wasting the earth; they who wallow in luxury, while the people are 'steeped in poverty to the very lips', and bowed to the earth with unremitting labor, can have but little sympathy with those whose loss of liberty and property is their gain." As Hazlitt's imagination could perceive the abstract only with great intellectual effort, his claims to philosophy notwithstanding, "arbitrary kings" became synonymous to his mind with the Bourbons, and the "aspiring minister" he visualized as Pitt. These he loathed with true Jacobinical hatred, the itensity of which may be gathered from the following: "A true Jacobin hates the enemies of liberty as they hate liberty, with all his strength and with all his might, and with all his heart and with all his soul. His memory is as long and his will as strong as theirs, though his hands are shorter. He never forgets or forgives an injury done to the people, for tyrants never forget or forgive one done to themselves."

It was but a step from the hatred of the Bourbons and Pitt to an affection for their chief opponent. Napoleon had trampled crowns in the dust; his enemies were the champions of "the Pope, the Inquisition, the Bourbons, and the doctrine of Divine Right." Napoleon therefore deserved his homage. That Napoleon was not a true Jacobin was of little import. "Did any of the Princes of Europe ever regard Buonaparte as anything more than the child and champion of Jacobinism? Why then should I? For on that point I bow to their judgments as infallible. Passion speaks truer than reason. If Buonaparte was a conqueror, he conquered the grand conspiracy of kings against the abstract right o the human race to be free; and I, as a man, could not be indifferent which side to take."

Hazlitt's political convictions were the cause of many fight. He never hesitated to speak his mind. On this he prided himself. "I say what I think: I think what I feel. I cannot help receiving certain impressions from things; and I have sufficient courage to declare (somewhat abruptly) what they are." Those who sided with Legitimacy he attacked regardless of the esteem in which he held them personally. Pitt and Burke, *The Times* and *The Quarterly Review* he regarded his natural foes and fought against them with unrelenting vigor. His quarrel with the Lake Poets was brought on by their political apostacy. When Coleridge and Wordsworth and Southey, "poets naturally Jacobin"—the men first to kindle his imagination, to stir his heart of heart, to waken his love for poetry and beauty—when these men espoused the cause of Legitimacy, his faith in mankind experienced a jolt. He said to himself: "poets are naturally inventors, creators of truth, of love, and beauty: and while they speak to us from the sacred shrine of their own hearts, while they pour out the pure treasures of thought to the world, they cannot be too much admired and applauded; but when, forgetting their high calling, and becoming tools and puppets in the hands of power, they pass off the gewgaws of corruption and love—tokens of self-interest as the gifts of the Muse, they cannot be too much despised and shunned." And the more he brooded over the frailty of man's mind, and the inconsistancy of man's opinions, the more vexed and dour he became. Indeed in his later years his misanthropy became so pronounced that his friend Leigh Hunt wrote to him frankly, addressing him in the third person: "I never seem to know whether he is pleased or displeased, cordial or uncordial—indeed, his manners are never cordial—and he has a way with him, when first introduced to you, and ever afterwards, as if he said, 'I have no faith in anything, especially your advances: don't flatter yourself you have any road to my credulity: we have nothing in common between us.'"

Southey incensed Hazlitt most. It was disgraceful enough for Wordsworth and Coleridge to join the ranks of the enemies of liberty; nevertheless they appeared to do so out of conviction. But that the author of *Wat Tyler* and *Joan of Arc* should write Birthday odes to princesses and propagate bills limiting the freedom of the press, seemed monstrous to the faithful Jacobin. Why should Southey have degraded himself so abjectly? Hazlitt construed that the laurel wreath was the chief reason for this apostacy. "Mr. Southey is incapable of forming any other opinions but from his feelings: he never had any other opinions, he never will have any others, worth a rush. When the opinions he professes ceased to be the dictates of his heart, they became the dictates of his vanity and interest; they became good for nothing . . . He began with a decent hatred of kings and priests, but he yielded to his greater hatred of the man who trampled them in the dust. He does not feel such affection to those that are born to thrones, but that any one should gain a throne as he had gained the laureate-wreath, by superior merit alone, was the unpardonable sin against Mr. Southey's levelling Muse." He therefore wrote against the "renegade" with withering scorn. The name of Southey is to be found in Hazlitt's writings many times, and it is ever accompanied with a contemptuous sneer or a piercing thrust.

Hazlitt's most venomous darts were reserved for the editor of *The Quarterly Review.* The Lake poets he admired at least for their poetry, and his onset upon them was made only after they had violated what he regarded a sacred trust. For the editor who persecuted him most unfairly he spared no contumely. The man who constantly referred to him as "pimpled Hazlitt" and generally abused him at all times, is thus portrayed in the *Letter to William Gifford:* "There cannot be a greater nuisance than a dull, envious, pragmatical, low-bred man, who is placed as you are in the situation of the Editor of such a work as *The Quarterly Review.* Conscious that his reputation stands on very slender and narrow grounds, he is naturally jealous of that of others. He insults over unsuccessful authors; he hates successful ones. He is angry at the faults of a work; more angry at its excellences. If an opinion is old, he treats it with supercilious indifference; if it is new, it provokes his rage. Everything beyond his limited range of inquiry, appears to him a paradox and an absurdity: and he resents every suggestion of the kind as an imposition on the public, and an imputation on his own sagacity. He cavils at what he does not apprehend, and misrepresents what he knows to be true. Bound to go through the nauseous task of abusing all those who are not like himself the abject tools of power, his irritation increases with the number of obstacles he encounters, and the number of sacrifices he is obliged to make of common sense and decency to his interest and self-conceit. Every instance of prevarication he wilfully commits makes him more in love with hypocrisy, and every indulgence of his hired malignity makes him more disposed to repeat the insult and the injury. His understanding becomes daily more distorted, and his feeling more and more callous. Grown old in the service of corruption, he drivels on to the last with prostituted impotence and shameless effrontry; salves a meager reputation for wit, by venting the driblets of his spleen and impertinence on others; answers obtuseness of intellect for a particular acuteness, not to be imposed upon by shallow appearances; unprincipled rancor for jealous loyalty; and the irritable, discontented, vindictive, peevish effusions of bodily pain and mental imbecility for proofs of refinement of taste and strength of understanding. Such, Sir, is the picture of which you have set for the outline."

Saintsbury writes in reference to this letter: "He [Hazlitt] screams, he foams at the mouth, he gnashes and tears and kicks, rather than fights." It is apparent that Saintsbury missed the essential point of the controversy. As a fighter Hazlitt has no peers amongst men of letters. His blows are always straight from the shoulder. No matter how incensed he was, no matter how acrid in his accusations, he never lost his sense of fairness; no matter how much contempt he had for the political views of Burke, Scott and Southey, he always accompanied his invectives with due appreciation of their talents. The controversy with Gifford was on a different basis. Hazlitt never considered him his equal; his contempt for him was that of an honest man for a spy. When *The Quarterly Review* singled him out for its vituperative abuse, he met the attack of the editor as one would a snake: he trampled him in the dust. If one considers the comparative positions of the two adversaries, the *Letter* is a work of great courage.

To us, whose political views are passive and of minor consequence, the subject of Legitimacy appears rather academic. Even during the late war, when the Kaiser became the symbol of evil, we hated the German autocrat more out of duty than passion. But a century back the struggle between autocracy and democracy was genuine indeed. One took sides naturally, and with ardor. The few but fervent democrats came forth like so many Davids, with faith in their hearts and freedom as their battle-cry. Hazlitt was such a David. Hence his unrelenting hatred of kings, his prolonged admiration for Napoleon, his quarreling with the "turncoats." Hence all the persecution and calumny directed at him throughout his later years. Hence the misanthropic cry of the weary warrier: "Enough, my soul, turn from them, and let me try to regain the obscurity and quiet that I love, 'far from the madding crowd,' in some sequestered corner of my own, or in some distant land."

In 1820, when Hazlitt was forty-two, married and a father, he fell violently in love with Sarah Walker. He yielded himself completely to this emotional outburst. As nothing he felt strongly was long kept from the pages of his writings, this daughter of his landlord soon found herself condemned or commended as the mood prompted him. Thus at one time he writes of her: "The greatest hypocrite I ever knew was a little, demure, pretty, modest-looking girl, with eyes timidly cast upon the ground, and an air soft as enchantment; the only circumstance that could lead to a suspicion of her true character was a cold, sullen, watery, glazed look about the eyes, which she bent on vacancy, as if determined to avoid all explanation with yours." But two pages farther he bestows upon her the highest praise than man can give to woman: "The ideal we fall down and worship is an image familiar to our minds. It has been present to our waking thoughts, it has haunted us in our dreams, like some fairy vision. Oh! thou, who, the first time I ever beheld thee, dist draw my soul into the circle of thy heavenly looks, and wave enchantments around me, do not think thy conquest was less complete because it was instantaneous; for in that gentle form (as if another Imogen had entered) I saw all that I ever loved of female grace, modesty, and sweetness." To such extremes did this wild passion carry him that he divorced his wife in order to marry the girl he loved; and her refusal so outraged his senses that he continued the madman until after his notorious *Liber Amoris* was written and published. This shameless confession out-Rousseaud Rousseau. It was deplorable enough to have behaved like a passionate adolescent toward a girl apparently so unworthy of him; but wilfully to publish the record of his own shame went against everyone's sense of decency—according to his detractors.

This manifestation of nympholepsy is regrettable. Nevertheless it is too irrevelant to have affected Hazlitt's literary reputation to the length it did. The artistic temperament is peculiarly free from moral scruples. Men become artists by virtue of the fineness and intensity of their emotional experiences; and where the heart predominates, passion and not reason holds sway. This is true of all artists. Their moral behavior rarely affects the merit of their work. Moreover, Hazlitt's generation was particularly free from moral restraint. The romantic revolt discarded all decorum. Feeling and sentiment were consciously pampered; authority and standards were reviled and abused. The sexual life of Byron and Shelley and Wordsworth even—was hardly exemplary; the opium excesses of Coleridge and De Quincey are well described by both. All these men are deservedly dear to the hearts of Englishmen. In the opinion of certain critics, however, the publication of *Liber Amoris* brought the fate of Ishmael upon its author. The truth is that the volume was unfairly exploited by his political enemies because of his ardent championship of democracy; and that they have succeeded in stigmatizing him is certainly an affront to poetic justice.

Let us examine the matter a little more closely. Hazlitt was endowed with an extremely impressionable nervous system. As a youth he revelled in the literature of sentiment. *Tom Jones*, the first novel to make a permanent impression upon his mind, he knew by heart; the parlor romances of Richardson and the chamber narratives of Sterne he knew almost as well. For fully two years his heart fed on the *Confessions* and *The New Heloise*. His longing for affection was always urgent. The face of a pretty woman attracted him with greater force than it does most men. But not once did he succeed in satisfying his emotional craving; a certain abruptness of manner caused his affection to be abused time after time. Then came his marriage to Sarah Stoddard. Why he married her he knew not himself—except that he was desperately in need of of a comforting mate, and she was the only woman of his acquaintance willing to marry him. The marriage was a failure from the first: his emotional longing remained unsatisfied. There is no truth in his boast of being able to furnish "a list of humble beauties, servant maids and shepherd-girls, with their red elbows, hard hands, black stockings and mob-caps . . . equal to Cowley's," unless it be in the make-believe of his fancy. An emotional crisis was fast approaching when in 1820 he decided to separate from his wife. He felt himself confronted by a dingy, lusterless old age—more wretched even than the years immediately behind him.

In his new London lodgings Sarah Walker used to bring his meals into his chamber. According to De Quincey she was "of interesting person, and endowed with strong intellectual sensibilities." Hazlitt and she were soon most friendly. She often remained with him by the hour, and appeared to have much more than a casual interest in him, while he gave her some token of his regard for her rather frequently. This was a new and sweet experience to the lonely man. One day he said to her: "You are the only woman that ever made me think she loved me, and that feeling was so new to me, and so delicious, that it 'will never out from my heart!'" All the passion of his being, thwarted and taut for more than twenty years, was now released into a torrent of emotion. The poor flirt was quite overwhelmed, and fled from him as from a madman. The jealous torment and the renewed ache of rejection was more than his sick heart could bear. And he was so constituted that his only means of relief was to write this sickness of heart and madness of mind out of himself. As he says: "After I have once written on a subject it goes out of my mind: my feelings about it have been melted down into words, and *them* I forget." *Liber Amoris* was the result. When its last page was written, Hazlitt's passion for Sarah Walker came to an end. Who but asmug hireling can be less generous to the unhappy man than De Quincey, who was not in the list of Hazlitt's friends! His comment on the much-abused volume is in part as follows: "There was no indelicacy in such an act of confidence, growing as it did out of his lacerated heart. It was an explosion of frenzy. He threw out his clamorous anguish to the clouds, and to the winds, and to the air; caring not *who* might listen, *who* might sympathise, or *who* might sneer. Pity was no demand of his; laughter no wrong; the sole necessity for *him* was—to empty his over burdened spirit."

II

As a literary critic Hazlitt is not without his shortcomings. His general reading was very limited; his memory was characteristically Rousseauistic; his idea of imagination was typically romantic. His exuberance of gusto sometimes blurred the acuteness of his vision, and a natural impatience with generalization prevented his several attempts at literary theorizing from being thorough and consistent with his own work. Nevertheless, his critical writings are of such import that he figures among the leading English critics.

The tenacity with which the impressions of his youth clung to Hazlitt's mind is truly extraordinary. The more lasting of his impressions, those which were most vivid to his mind's eye, and which he most doted upon, were gained during the last eight years of his residence at Wem, when he was in his teens and comparatively idle and free from care. This period of his life is in many respects similar to Rousseau's own youth at Charmettes. And the marvellous retrospective powers of these two men, the constant return to the period of their youth for solace and peace, comes not merely from a reflective tendency of mind but in a greater measure even from the painful experiences of their latter years.

Hazlitt was not unaware of this tenacious trait. But he did not regard it as a weakness: he hugged the memories of his youth with a naive pride. "I conceive that the past is as real and substantial a part of our being, that it is as much a bona-fide, undeniable consideration in the estimate of human life, as the future can possibly be . . . There are impressions which neither time nor circumstances can efface. Were I to live much longer than I have any chance of doing, the books which I read when I was young, I can never forget." The past enticed him again and again; and always he returned to it with the eagerness of the amorous swain.

This unceasing fondness for his youthful memories prevented Hazlitt from doing adequate justice to the work of his younger contemporaries. He was not possessed of that sense of curiosity which is the prime requisite of the true scholar; and after he was thirty years old he read new books only when it was essential to his writing or to his lecturing. This lack troubled him little, however, as is evident from the following passages: "To a want of general reading I plead guilty, and am sorry for it; but perhaps if I had read more I should have thought less." "I hate to read new books. There are twenty or thirty volumes that I have read over and over again, and these are the only ones I have any desire to read at all." "I am too old to be a convert to a new mythology of genius. The niches are occupied, the tables are full."

The lack of a wide reading acquaintance with the world's good books is naturally regarded as a grave handicap to a professional critic of literature. In comparison to most first rate critics, Hazlitt appears ignorant of book-knowledge. Nevertheless, the men who accuse him of ignorance admit him readily to the list of prominent critics. This apparent paradox resolves itself as follows. There are two kinds of critics: scholar-critics and artist-critics. The first, men like A. W. Schlegel, Taine and Saintsbury, are primarily scholars. Their *forte* is the knowledge of literature and esthetics. In criticising a book or an author they aim to inform, to analyze, to compare, to classify. Their critical efforts are, briefly, the expression of their scholarship. These men serve best the function of teachers; men read their writings to be instructed. Ignorance in such critics is therefore inexcusable. Had Hazlitt belonged to this class of critics, his name would long since have been added to posterity's scrapheap. But Hazlitt was no such critic. His workshop was not the library but the human heart as expressed in books. "I am partial," he says, "to works of art, especially painting, but more than all I like to study man." His strength lay in feeling keenly and deeply, and in expressing what he felt artistically. His equipment in this respect was of the finest: he was as much a master of the motives of the heart and the caprices of the imagination as the scholar-critic is of the imagination's literary offspring. He wrote not to inform and to classify but to convey his finely felt impressions as directly as possible to the heart of his readers. And he succeeded in his aim because of the happy union between his imaginative susceptibility and a consciously cultivated gusto. Whatever he wrote breathes with passion, sparkles with gemlike phrases; the reader takes as much delight in the manner as in the matter of his work. What books and authors he did write about he knew intimately; and his opinion of them, arrived at with intuitive directness, are as accurate and more valuable than those of the scholar. A lack of book-knowledge in him was therefore hardly calamitous.

Impressionistic criticism, the form best adapted to the mind of the artist-critic, began to manifest itself positively toward the close of the eighteenth century. Its exponents were securely perched on the wing of the romantic revolt, and lifted their voices in exulted song immediately upon the defeat of the neo-classic standards. Their song was at first shrill and lacking in harmony. Hazlitt, being one of the first impressionists, sang to a tune of his own making; not a little of it, however, being in the pure Johnsonian tradition.

What is the purpose of criticism? Is it merely to indicate that a book is good or bad, that an author writes elegantly and from a moral point of view or that he is lacking in one or the other of these qualities? Is not the aim of criticism something finer, something subtler? These questions occupied Hazlitt's mind for some time. The attitude of the eighteenth century critics toward this perplexing problem only irritated him. In actual life or in art, he said to himself, "we sometimes see a face melting into beauty by the force of sentiment—an eye that, in its liquid mazes, forever expanding and forever retiring within itself, draws the soul after it, and temps the rash beholder to its fate." How can such a face, and such an eye, be measured by rules and standards? Will comparison even, convey the effect upon their beholder? Obviously, reason alone cannot probe the inner recesses of the heart. Finer methods, more pointed plumbs must be employed, if the emotional nature of man and art is to be sounded to its depths. Hazlitt consequently arrived at what he believed the heart of the matter: "In art, in taste, in life, in speech, you decide from feeling and not from reason; that is, from the impression of a number of things on the mind, which impression is true and well founded, though you may not be able to analyse or account for it in the several particulars." As soon as he accepted the superiority of feeling over reason, he felt himself on solid ground; it became a matter of receiving impressions as accurately and as discriminatingly as possible, and of expressing them in a most suitable manner.

To define taste and the imagination—the faculties that guide and excite the emotions—was his next problem. What is the imagination? Is it at all associated with reason? Should it be restrained and affixed to some center? Or is it most potent when free? These questions Hazlitt answered in the light of his foregoing conclusions. "Imagination is the power of carrying on a given feeling into other situations, which must be done best according to the hold which the feeling itself has taken on the mind. In new and unknown combinations, the impression must act by sympathy, and not by rule; but there can be no sympathy, where there is no passion, no original interest. The personal interest may in some cases oppress and circumscribe the imaginative faculty, as in the instance of Rousseau: but in general the strength and consistency of the imagination will be in proportion to the strength and depth of feeling; and it is rarely that a man even of lofty genius will be able to do more than carry on his own feelings and character, or some prominent and ruling passion, into fictitious and uncommon situations." Passion and the imagination are thus conceived to be depending on one another for their activity and effectiveness; the union of the two permitted the most satisfactory insight into a work of art.

It might be asked at this juncture how Hazlitt was certain that his critical opinions, being so personal and so spontaneous, were not therefore vitiated by prejudice? The possession of taste—was his reply. To his thinking "a genuine criticism should reflect the colors, the light and shade, the soul and body of a work," and taste alone can focus the critic's senses most accurately. Not taste in the Voltairean or Johnsonian sense!

Genuine romantic that he was, he conceived of taste as the creative reflection of genius. "Genius is the power of producing excellence: taste is the power of perceiving the excellence thus produced in the several sorts and degrees, with all their force, refinement, distinctions, and connections. In other words, taste (as it relates to the productions of art) is strictly the power of being properly affected by works of genius. It is the proportioning admiration to power, pleasure to beauty: it is entire sympathy with the finest impulses of the imagination, not antipathy, not indifference to them. The eye of taste may be said to reflect the impressions of real genius, as the even mirror reflects the objects of nature in all their clearness and lustre, instead of distorting or diminishing them." To sum up: he who is able to feel strongly, imagine passionately, and reflect genius accurately—possesses the qualities most needed by the artist-critic. Only those familiar with the academic pedantry that was in Hazlitt's day parading as learned criticism can appreciate the innovating radicalism of this critical credo.

Impressionistic criticism, erratic as it sometimes tends to be, is the mode eminently suited to interpret the major portion of modern or romantic art. Romantic literature—lyrical in its description of strange and undefinable feeling, exotic in its longing for the infinite, quixotic in its love of chimeras, aglow with sentimental intensity—cannot be judged by the standards of reason. One may either condemn it altogether, or attempt to grasp its sensuous quality through an act of the intuition. Prejudice apart, none can appreciate a work of art intuitively with greater firmness than the true impressionist. Excellence in style is a concomitant virtue: he must needs have the stylistic quality of the artist if he is to express feeling through the combination of words. But in departing from the road paved with critical rules and classical standards, the impressionistic critic enters upon the narrow path of his own personality. In order to be able to criticize literature truly the artist-critic must have a heart sagacious enough and a soul discerning enough to comprehend human nature in all its complexity. His powers of intuition must be so keen, so varied, so sympathetic, that nothing man has thought or felt may leave him unmoved. Only a genius can rise to these demands. Yet the impressionistic method, because if its apparent simplicity and personal emphasis, is embraced mostly by superficial minds. These men begin with the belief that a book can best be criticized by conveying how it impressed them and end with the assertion that their impression is more important than the book itself. This frequent abuse of the impressionistic method has made it odious to its opponents, and with justice. When a mediocre and presumptious person adopts the method requiring the finest human faculties, little more than puniness, prejudice and brazenness may be expected.

How then does Hazlitt fare when measured by these demands? Taking his body of criticism as a whole, he has few peers. The heart had few secrets for him, and his sympathy was of the quickest. With a gusto that was peculiarly his, he went straight to the heart of books and men, and what he found he expressed in sentences of glittering brilliance. In essay after essay and lecture after lecture he discussed literature and life with the freedom and insight of sheer genius. Imperfectly read as he was, and clinging to his first opinions with dangerous tenacity, his critical appreciations are in the main as acute today as when he first uttered them.

A healthy humanism lay at the core of Hazlitt's critical work. Though a Jacobin child of the romantic revolt, he was possessed of much natural restraint. His good sense was almost always in the service of his intuitive perspicacity. If he did not approach a work of literature with syntactical rules and academic compasses, he tested it nevertheless at the anvil of reality—seeking to discover its tension and spark. The following instances are typical of the numerous buoys indicating the course of his critical thought. "We confess, however much we may admire independence of feeling and erectness of spirit in general and practical questions, yet in works of genius we prefer him who bow to the authority of nature, who appeals to actual objects, to mouldering superstitions, to history, to observation, and tradition, before him who only consults the pragmatical and restless workings of his own breast, and gives them out as oracles to the world. We like a writer (whether poet or prose-writer) who takes in (or is willing to take in) the range of half the universe in feeling, in character, description, much better than we do one who obstinately and invariably shuts himself up in the Bastile of his own ruling passions." "The charm of poetry depends on the union of fancy with reality, on its finding a tally in the human breast; and without this, all its tumid efforts will be less pernicious than vain and abortive." Speaking of the French antipathy to Shakespeare and the English dislike of Racine, Hazlitt, whom the French dramatist afforded little pleasure, says, nevertheless: "We may be sure of this, that when we see nothing but grossness and barbarism, or insipidity or verbiage, in a writer that is the God of a nation's idolatry, it is we and not they who want true taste and feeling." Because of this clear-headedness he straight sought out the salient characteristics of his contemporaries—Byron's intensity and romantic irony, Wordsworth's egoism, Moore's dazzling hollowness, Coleridge's brilliant obscurity, Shelley's philosophic fanaticism, Keats' effeminate beauty; and his discussion of them is hardly surpassed in soundness and in depth by those who followed after him. Likewise, his criticism of the Elizabethans and of the Restoration comedies, of the works of Moliére and Rousseau and Burke, of the Waverley novels, and of certain works of lesser significance—appreciative as it is—is tempered with the taste of the true impressionist. Again, his discerning analysis of Shakespeare's plays is less idolatrous and more sensitive than Schlegel's and more judicious if less brilliant than Coleridge's.

Moreover, he was the only romantic critic of his day, except Byron, to defend the poetry of Pope, finding sufficient beauty in his fanciful couplets to say: "If I had to choose, there are but one or two persons, and but one or two, that I should like to have been better than Pope." Milton is another poet he championed: "It is the common cant of criticism to consider every allusion to the classics, and particularly in a mind like Milton's, as pedantry and affection. Habit is a second nature; and, in this sense, the pedantry (if it be called so) of a scholastic enthusiast, who is constantly referring to images of which his mind is full, is as graceful as it is natural. It is not affection in him to recur to ideas and modes of expression, with which he has the strongest associations, and in which he takes the greatest delight." On the strength of these differences he attacked the Coleridgean mode of criticism rather severly: "The modern or metaphysical system of criticism supposes the question *why?* to be repeated at the end of every decision; and the answer gives birth to interminable arguments and discussion." "The mawkish platonics and maudlin metaphysics" of this critical school went against his good sense, and he spoke out against it with vigor.

Hazlitt's *faux pas*—impressionistic idiosyncrasies arising out of the mood of the moment—are comparatively negligible. A fit of temper was likely to put his critical eye out of focus, and an appetizingly roasted partridge eaten before a hearth always tended to prejudice him in favor of a book and its author. At one time he rashly compared "the classical Akenside" with Wordsworth to the advantage of the first. But he more than rectified his error in *The Spirit of the Age*. Wordsworth is there adjudged the most original poet of his generation, while Akenside is dismissed with two short sentences. On several occasions he commended *Caleb Williams* as "one of the best novels in the language"; Godwin's place among English novelists of the time hardly warranted so extreme a statement. His praise of primitivism, brought forth in the belief of Rousseau's theory of "the noble savage," caused him to join Ossian to the Bible, Homer and Dante as the four greatest sources of poetry. He also preferred Wharton's sonnets to Shakespeare's. Of a more controversial nature are the following statements. Of Mrs. Hannah More's writings he says succinctly: "She has written a great deal I have never read." "Sir Philip Sidney," he confesses, "is a writer for whom I cannot acquire a taste." *The Acadia* bored him to tears.Ben Jonson is another writer to impress him unfavorably. "I cannot much relish Ben Jonson, though I have taken some pains to do it, and went to the task with every sort of good will." These aberrations are, however, insignificant in comparison; mere chance statements that in nowise affect the basic soundness of his critical writings.

The gusto with which he read a book that pleased him, and with which his style is so strongly permeated, is one of Hazlitt's distinct contributions to criticism. None before him or since wrote about literature so astutely and yet so pleasurably. The emotional relish with which he reacted to things outside of himself, the enthusiasm with which he either hated or loved, the sincerity with which he disclosed his thought and feeling—these components of his character coalesced into the gusto with which his writings are animated.

Contemporaries of Coleridge and Hazlitt have made the claim that both talked much better than they wrote. Certainly Hazlitt was "the most brilliant Wednesday man" at the Lambs. His style possesses the sparkle of the eloquent conversationalist. The fact that much of his literary work was first embodied in lecture form, and that his best essays are contained in volumes with such titles as *Table Talk*, *The Round Table*, *The Plain Speaker*, indicates how much the characteristics of conversation have pervaded his writings. How conscious he was of the conversationality of his style may be surmised from the following: "No style s good, that is not fit to be spoken or read aloud with effect.

This holds true not only of emphasis and cadence, but also with regard to natural idiom and colloquial freedom." The effectiveness of his own style is in this respect unquestioned. His diction has an Anglo-Saxon freshness and purity; his words are most carefully chosen for their fitness and force. Phrase follows phrase with accelerating brilliancy, each expanding or amplifying the same idea; and so quickly do they come, and with such apparent ease, that one is struck with their spontaneity. One never feels in his pages the artificial orderliness of Pater or the deliberate idiosyncrasy of expression of Carlyle and Meredith.

This conversational quality is best evident in *The Spirit of the Age*. The essays on Scott and Coleridge are especially vivid. Brilliantly climactic sentences of several pages in length are followed with striking effect by two or three of not more than five to eight words. When read aloud, the shorter sentences sound like the unexpected cracks of a whip. Worthy of mention also is his habit of enumerating a man's attributes in a series of sentences, all beginning with "He Has;" or the discharge of a number of telling "hences" with breath-taking rapidity.

Certain writers have sharply criticized the frequency with which Hazlitt resorts to quoted phrases. The truth is that these quotations—so conspicuous numerically; are so apt and fitting and ornamental, that their presence appears natural and desirable. One who knows how thoroughly familiar Hazlitt was with the works from which he drew his passages, cannot but accept this stylistic mannerism with the same sense of pleasure that Hazlitt accepted the classical allusions of Milton. A habit less defensible was his aptitude to repeat himself. It was customary for him to use certain of his paragraphs as often as the occasion called for. This may have been the result of indolence; again, it may well have been the consequence of unavoidable haste or the frank admission of having nothing more to say on the subject. These repetitions are few, however, and met with only by those who read the whole of his writings.

Although it is not the purpose of this essay to discuss Hazlitt's essay-writing, one cannot refrain from a brief word of praise. Some writers have contended that Hazlitt is a better essayist than he is a critic. One need not go this distance to regard Addison's essays, for instance, as flat and commonplace in comparison to Hazlitt's. Without the geniality of Lamb, and without the range and delicacy of Montaigne, Hazlitt's intensity of feeling and warmth of gusto easily place his essays among the best specimens of the genre. *My First Acquaintance with Poets, The Pleasure of Hating, The Fight, Going on a Journey, The Pleasure of Painting, The Indian Jugglers*—who can read these essays and not be convinced of Hazlitt's genius!

SOLITUDE

By Siddie Joe Johnson

Here in this magic loneliness, until
We came, the tides of being onward swept
In rhythmic fluctuation; slowly crept
Sunlight and starlight over this wide hill;
Here day and night have felt the timeless thrill
Of self-charm mirrored where the river slept;
And in this grass are prints where Life has stepped
Forever through these trees, high-arched and still.

Here beauty must have been where, splendid, falls
Such wealth of beauty now, unless (as when
Sound, born in solitude, is judged still-born
For lack of mid-wife ears) these ancient thralls
Of loveliness, for want of quickening men,
Till now were void—these streams and hills, forlorn.

THE NIGHTCAP OF THE PROPHET ELIAS

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY AUGUST VON KOTZEBUE

Translated from the German by Beatrice B. Beebe

Cast of Characters

Hans Von Der Kolbe, *a knight*
Sidonia, *his daughter*
Max, *his brother*
Erich Finsterwald,
Kaspar Blutstein, *Knights*
Rudolph Krummwinkel,
Konrad Pumper,
Edwin, *young adopted son of Hans von der Kolbe*

Scene—*Estate of* Hans von der Kolbe, *with a few linden trees. Under one of them, a table and on it a pitcher and glasses.* Hans *and the knights are sitting around the table. On the side of the stage on a stone bench sits* Max *in pilgrim's garb, with this hat brim turned down. He quietly observes the proceedings.*

Hans von der Kolbe.—Welcome, neighbors and friends! Fellows! bring more wine.

Konrad Pumper (*Somewhat tipsy*).—Right! It is splendid wine!

All.—Hail!

Erich Finsterwald.—Long live Sir Hans von der Kolbe!

All.—Hail!

Erich Finsterwald.—The noblest knight in all Rhineland.

Kaspar Blutstein.—The richest!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—The wisest!

Hans von der Kolbe (*Smiling with satisfaction.*)—Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! I thank you, gentlemen.

Erich Finsterwald.—He can argue with every doctor.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Every doctor! With every prelate!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—And he writes songs along with the best of the Meistersingers.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Not yet! Not yet!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—I will defend that statement with sword and lance if necessary.

Kaspar Blutstein.—A faithful friend.

Erich Finsterwald.—A magnanimous enemy.

Konrad Pumper.—A good neighbor.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—A benefactor of the poor.

Edwin.—Yes, he is certainly that.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Stop, gentlemen! You make me blush.

Erich Finsterwald.—Hey there, Pilgrim! You agree, don't you?

Hans von der Kolbe.—Let him alone, he is a stranger.

Edwin (*Hands a goblet to* Max).—There, drink to my good foster father's health.

Max *bows and drinks.*

Kaspar Blutstein.—You probably have wandered about a bit in the world, yet I am sure you have not found so brave a knight anywhere.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Therefore, we would all give our lives for him.

Erich Finsterwald.—That goes without saying.

Hans von der Kolbe.—God knows. You move me to tears.

Konrad Pumper.—Don't take it so to heart, Sir Hans. All is not gold that glitters. But as an honest knight I can say to you, "Your wine is good."

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Wine-bibber. Have you no mind for greater gifts?

Konrad Pumper.—Wine is the greatest gift of God.

Kaspar Blutstein.—You ought rather to be silent like young Edwin. There he sits as bashful as a girl.

Edwin.—Such praise of my benefactor would be superfluous from my mouth. It has long been known to all of you that he took me into his castle as a poor shieldbearer, and had me instructed in all knightly practices. Yes, that he took me for his own son. May God repay him a thousand fold. (*Drinks.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Oh, never mind that, Edwin, I did it gladly.

Konrad Pumper.—Yes, see, let Konrad Pumper also drink to you for that. (*Drinks.*) And I say to you that you can believe the word of this good youth. When he drank just then, I saw a tear fall into the wine. The other gentlemen here . . . . are also good people . . .

Erich Finsterwald.—Providence made you say that.

Konrad Pumper.—Everyone wishes the best for himself, and if you did not have such a beautiful daughter . . .

Kaspar Blutstein.—What's that? What do you mean by that?

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—We are all honestly devoted to Sir Hans von der Kolbe.

Erich Finsterwald.—Without any self-interest.

Hans von der Kolbe.—I know, you good people, I know.

Kaspar Blutstein.—And even if you had no child . . .

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—And no estates . . .

Erich Finsterwald.—And no wine . . .

Konrad Pumper.—What! No wine?

Hans von der Kolbe.—I thank God for such friends.

Kaspar Blutstein.—That you have promised to choose among us today a son-in-law——

Konrad Pumper.—Aha! Now we come to it!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—All the same you would not have forgotten.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Today, yes, yes.

FINSTERWALD *rises and takes* SIR HANS *aside while the others get their heads together.*

Erich Finsterwald.—You know, neighbor, we have had a bloody feud between us for many long years. Now for the sake of peace, the welfare of humanity, give me your daughter that we may put a stop to further bloodshed. Now, I reason thus: we both have subjects; we are both responsible to God for their lives. Therefore, choose me for your son-in-law. I am not concerned about the young lady, nor about your wealth, only about blessed PEACE.

Hans von der Kolbe.—You are a fine man. You shall have her.

They go back to the table, but when HANS *is about to sit,* BLUTSTEIN *draws him aside again.*)

Kaspar Blutstein.—May I tell you, neighbor, why I wish above everything else to become your son-in-law? Not because of your possessions and wealth, I have sufficient myself. What I admire in you is the noble use which you make of your wealth—

your piety—your magnaminity . . . God help me, I want to become very good. I can learn from no better preacher than you. Therefore . . . do you understand me?

Hans von der Kolbe.—You are a fine man. You shall have her.

(*They go back to the table, yet when* Sir Hans *is about to seat himself,* Krummwinkel *draws him aside.*)

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Sir, if I were to say I was madly in love with your daughter, or that I longed for your inheritance, it would be a lie. I desire to become your son-in-law because no one hangs upon your words with more eager admiration than do I, when you write the beautiful songs, in spite of Heinrich von Veldeck and Wolfram von Eschenbach. You may be interested to know that I have learned to write, even to write your songs on parchment, and I will buy all the asses in the whole world to make parchment from their hides. For your songs must be preserved for posterity . . . and . . . therefore, give me your daughter.

Hans von der Kolbe.—You are a fine man. You shall have her.

(*They seat themselves at the table.*)

Konrad Pumper.—Well, how about it? Is the betrothal to be celebrated today?

Erich Finsterwald.—Declare yourself, neighbor Hans.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Choose a noble son-in-law.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Who has honest and good intentions toward you.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Dear Sirs, that is just the trouble. You are all so honestly intentioned toward me, but I have only one daughter.

Erich Finsterwald.—Give her to the oldest.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Pick one of us for her.

Konrad Pumper.—Give her to him that can drink the best. That's me.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Have patience but a little while longer.

(*Knights murmur among themselves.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Yes, if only my brother, brave Max von der Kolbe, still lived! He was a wise man and could always give good advice. To undertake a pilgrimage to Palestine may, perhaps, to his holy soul have seemed a very wise thing to do, but his long absence has often caused me bitter anguish. Yes, if he were but here, he could decide.

Max (*Removes hat and beard*).—If you so desire, my dear brother!

Hans von der Kolbe (*Rushes into his arms*).—What! Max! Is it really you? You are a thousand times welcome!

Max.—So you haven't forgotten me, noble Hans?

Hans von der Kolbe.—I have always fed your old charger with my own hands, and have written many a beautiful elegy on your death.

Erich Finsterwald. (*Rises with the others*).—Sir Max . . . we all bid you welcome.

(*The knights shake hands with Max.*)

Max.—Many thanks! Many thanks!

Hans von der Kolbe.—You have come just in the nick of time, dear brother. Your niece has grown up. Now you may choose a bridegroom for her.

Kaspar Blutstein (*Quickly draws* MAX *aside*).—Just so it isn't Finsterwald, he is not honorably minded.

Rudolph Krummwinkel (*Also draws* MAX *aside*).—Be careful of Kaspar Blutstein. He is a tricky fellow.

Erich Finsterwald (*Also draws* MAX *aside.*)—On no account whatever should you trust Rudolph Krummwinkel.

Hans von der Kolbe.—You hear, brother, very noble men.

Max—Yes, I hear. If you will permit me, gentlemen, I would like to speak a few words in private with my brother.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Come, we will stroll over there toward the kennels and see the hounds.

Erich Finsterwald and Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Fine! Fine!

(*All leave except* PUMPER *who is asleep.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Thank God, Brother, you have come at last!

Max.—It is probably high time, for to my way of thinking you are being advised by evil companions.

Hans von der Kolbe.—What's that? What do you mean? Just take that back. My one grief is that I can give the preference to but one, although each of them deserves it.

Max.—I will have to tell you that I stayed over night two miles from here with the worthy Guntram von Fennern, who knew but little good of these fellows.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Fennern is an old dog in the manger.

Max.—He said that they consider you a fool.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Me? O ho! I would know that myself first of all.

Max.—No, Hans, people who are taken for fools usually learn it last of all.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Believe me, they are men precious as gold, my best, my truest friends.

Max.—He said they flatter you because of your beautiful, rich daughter.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Wrong, entirely wrong. Finsterwald desires my daughter only for the sake of peace. You know yourself . . . the old family feud. Blutstein, though I do say it, wants to make himself like me, and Krummwinkel cannot live without my daughter.

Max.—You let them all fool you so.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Fool me? No, no, Max. When one has lived a while in the world he can tell at a glance whether people have honest intentions or not.

Max.—Is that so?

Hans von der Kolbe.—I'll vouch for them.

Max.—You are just the same as ever. And your daughter, what does she say?

Hans von der Kolbe.—The poor child is just as ill over the affair as I am, and because it is so difficult to make a choice of one of the three, she has often begged me not to take any of them.

Max.—That request does not look as if she loved one of them.

Hans von der Kolbe.—I tell you she loves all three.

Max.—And young Edwin—who uttered such heartbreaking sighs whenever there was any mention of Sidonia's betrothal—what do you think of him?

Hans.—He is a good and grateful youth.

Max.—And in love with your daughter?

Hans.—Heaven forbid! I would have noticed that long ago.

Max.—I am certainly very glad that I followed old Fennern's advice, that I stole in first in my pilgrim's clothes; so no one was cautious before me, and I know now tolerably well where I am.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Brother, do not take offense with me, you have become very boastful in the Holy Land. How could you in two hours know your people better than I do in two years?

Max.—Many a man sees more in the first few minutes than another in a life-time. Fortunately, I am in a position to prove to you that I have seen correctly.

Hans.—Prove? You don't say so!

Max.—I will intrust you with a secret. You know that I went to the Holy Land to atone for the great injustice which in jealousy I had done to my dead wife. Still, it was to be done entirely in quietness, and I thought it would not be necessary that even a priest in Palestine should know the real reason for my atonement. Enough if I confided in my God. So I endured it and prepared at once for the return home, only I wanted to visit the sacred Mount Sinai before I came back. I did so. Tired from the climbing I called at the foot of the mountain on a pious hermit whom I found on his death bed, his head bound up in his cap. Suddenly an irrisistible impulse siezed me to confess to him the cause of my pilgrimage, and I did it voluntarily on the spot. He absolved me, and confided to me that the power which had immediately forced open my mouth was hidden merely in his nightcap.

Hans von der Kolbe.—In his nightcap?

Max.—Which had descended directly from the prophet Elias, who had lost it when he was taken up to heaven in the fiery chariot.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Brother, is that the truth? Or do you take me for a fool?

Max.—You need only to make the test. Here is the cap. The hermit made me a present of it. To whoever wears it on his head everyone says just what he really thinks.

Hans von der Kolbe.—The deuce!

Max.—No matter if it is ever so bad, there is nothing else for it, everything must come out.

Hans von der Kolbe.—It is too bad that we cannot try it on the spot!

Max.—But we can.

Hans von der Kolbe.—What good will that do? There is no one anywhere in my castle who thinks otherwise than he speaks.

Max.—All the better. You risk nothing then. Put it on, Brother.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Well, if you think—Ha! ha! ha! The prophet Elias must have had a very small head, his cap is a bit too tight for me.

Max.—Be quiet, here comes someone.

Erich Finsterwald (*Entering*).—Hey there, father-in-law. Are you going to bed soon that you have put on your nightcap?

Hans von der Kolbe.—The wine made me a bit sleepy.

Erich Finsterwald.—The wine? Don't spring that. You are always a lazy, sleepy fellow.

Hans von der Kolbe.—So?

Erich Finsterwald.—Your best course would be to lie in bed and sleep until doomsday.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Oh, do you think so?

Erich Finsterwald.—Yes, God knows my lands are mortgaged and I need your money, therefore let's have the wedding at once. Then you can die as soon as you please.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But I thought you wished it solely on account of peace . . .

Erich Finsterwald.—What an idea!

Hans von der Kolbe.—To check the bloodshed . . .

Erich Finsterwald.—That is a phrase for every treaty; it amounts to this: we are now exhausted and cannot fight any more.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But our subjects . . . for whose blood we must give account . . . didn't you say so?

Erich Finsterwald.—You will always be an old fool. Plain phrases, that is understood. Had I but the strength I would take your daughter from you by force. But I must be content with the fact that you are so easily duped. Yet, when once the wedding is over, I will soon cut you off short, do you understand me? (*Exit.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—The devil!

Max.—What do you say now?

Hans von der Kolbe.—This is a cursed cap! (*Throws it on the ground.*)

Max.—You should bless it. Quick, pick it up. Here comes someone else.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Puts cap on again*).—It is Blutstein. I can vouch for him.

Kaspar Blutstein (*Entering*).—Devil take me! There are no more beautiful hounds in the whole country . . . Ah, Sir Hans, you have made yourself comfortable!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Pardon me, I have such a ringing in my ears, I must have taken cold. Perhaps the warm cap will be good for me.

Kaspar Blutstein.—So it isn't apoplexy? That is too bad.

Hans von der Kolbe.—So? Do you think so? But my dogs? They please you?

Kaspar Blutstein.—No, they are damnable curs. Such a rich fellow and no better hunting. For shame!

Hans von der Kolbe.—I am rich, that is true.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Rich, but a niggard.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But I thought . . .

Kaspar Blutstein.—Yes, now and then you boast of a feast given twice a year and served up so that the dishes creak; only that it shall be said, "Old Hans von der Kolbe has entertained nobly," but the guests wipe their mouths and make sport of you.

Hans von der Kolbe.—I do all the good I can within my power for the poor.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Oh yes, every rascal can cheat you because you are a simple old man who believes everything that is prattled to him.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But you wanted to make yourself like me?

Kaspar Blutstein.—Did I say that? Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! I was just joking with you. But just let me become your daughter's husband, then we will change our tune.

Hans von der Kolbe.—So?

Kaspar Blutstein.—You can't manage your estates any more yourself. We will give you in the future a little room, and something to eat and drink, and a fool who will beguile away the time for you. The rest is my concern. Then it will be joyous around here. Feasting every day, and paid for by your money especially on your burial day, then we will rejoice so loud that you will hear it in purgatory. (*Exit.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Wait, you devil! Hereafter the drawbridge will be shut in your face. (*Is about to remove the cap.*)

Max.—Leave it on, dear Brother, here comes the third.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Oh, there is no need of it with him. He is the good poet who reveres the Meistersinger in me, if I do say it.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Crude people, Sir Hans, who walk about among the hunting dogs when they could be here with the muses. (*First becomes aware of the cap.*) Yes—surely it is better to hear the hounds howl than to listen to your so-called minnesongs.

Hans von der Kolbe.—The devil!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—It is amusing, Sir Hans, that you always dabble in verse making.

Hans von der Kolbe.—What's the matter, then, with my songs?

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—No strength! Insipid!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Yet formerly you were greatly charmed with them.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Not at all, you were just so simple as to believe it. A rich man with whom one feasts and who, above all, has a beautiful daughter, can always turn out the loveliest rhymes and he is always praised. That is, to his face, for behind his back everyone laughs in his sleeve.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Then are all my verses bad?

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—All! All!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Even the beautiful rhymes entitled THE POMEGRANITE GARDEN OF LOVE that once moved you to tears?

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—The crabapple garden, ha, ha, ha! As soon as I am your son-in-law, I will throw all your songs into the fire.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Even the drinking song that we sang every day?

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Oh, I just sang it with you because I wanted to win a rich bride by my singing. I saw very well that one must flatter you.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Perhaps it has escaped your memory? I will sing it for you.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Go to the devil with your continual croaking! I'll go and praise your hounds! (*Exit.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Alas! Who would have thought it!

(PUMPER *has awakened during the last speech and has staggered to his feet.*)

Konrad Pumper.—I always thought so, Sir Hans. Pay attention to what I say. Devil take me, I have always said you are a fine fellow, and have good wine, and therefor I stand by you. (*Exits reeling.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—He still says what he has always said. No more, no less.

Max.—That happens because the wine speaks for him. Your nightcap and the wine possess the same power.

Hans von der Kolbe.—If he were not a drunkard I would give my daughter to him. Now none of them shall have her. Then she shall not marry. That was probably her wish, anyhow.

Max.—I doubt it.

Hans von der Kolbe.—To what devil would I give her? There isn't a single honorable fellow in the world if he spoke just as he thought.

Max.—Well, well, don't reject the good with the bad. See, here comes one who perhaps will stand the test.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Oh, if the prophet Elias had only taken his nightcap to heaven with him!

(*Enter* EDWIN)

Max.—Edwin, come over here to me, you have scarcely greeted me.

Edwin.—And yet my joy at your return is probably the deepest and truest.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Softly*).—Do you believe him?

Max.—Why not?

Hans von der Kolbe.—Put on the cap. (*Puts it on his brother's head.*)

Edwin.—I have often grieved over you in silence, often begged your good brother to send me to Palestine to hunt for you.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Softly*).—Give the cap to me.

Max.—I believe you, my dear Edwin. You were but a boy when I went away, but even at that time you were a noble lad.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Puts cap on again*).—Listen, Edwin, now tell me, what do you think of me?

Edwin.—Have you not known that for a long time?

Hans von er Kolbe.—Some things a man likes to hear often.

Edwin.—I think that you are one of the most honorable, most generous men in the world, and my benefactor.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Aside*).—Thank God! One at last! (*Aloud*) But my wealth?

Edwin.—God grant that you may long enjoy it! And may you shut your gates on all spongers.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Aside*).—He is right. (*Aloud*) But my songs?

Edwin.—I am not impressed by them.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But what impression have they made on you?

Edwin.—None whatsoever.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Softly*).—Did you hear that, Brother?

Max.—Has he ever praised them?

Hans von der Kolbe.—No, not at all; but still it is annoying . . .

Max.—But not his fault.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Tell me, Edwin, which of the suitors for my daughter do you regard as the worthiest?

Edwin.—Ah, no one is worthy to possess the beautiful, noble Sidonia.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Yet they are splendid knights, they have lands and vassals.

Edwin.—Yes, if one of them loved her as I do . . .

Hans von der Kolbe.—You love her?

Edwin.—I worship her as a saint!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Ho! Ho! Have you ever said that to her?

Edwin.—Heaven help me! Such boldness . . .

Hans von der Kolbe.—Even to me you never confided a word of it?

Edwin.—You would never listen to it.

Hans von der Kolbe (*Laughing*).—No?

Edwin.—How could I, a poor orphan boy, ever act so ungratefully to you? I feel it, my helpless love will bring me to my grave. Yet I would rather die than grieve you. (*Exit.*)

Max.—I wish you happiness, dear Brother! You have at last found the man for your daughter.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Yes, yes, the lad is really very good . . . but that my verses have made no impression on him . . .

Max—You surely can pardon him for that.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But, Brother, consider . . . no impression at all!

Max.—Every man has his faults. On the other hand he would be the most grateful of sons-in-law.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Still I cannot give my daughter against her will . . .

Max.—Here she comes now.

Hans von der Kolbe.—I tell you she has a horror of marriage.

Max.—I would only believe that with your nightcap on.

Hans von er Kolbe.—My own son would not lie to me.

(SIDONIA *enters and runs up to* MAX.)

Sidonia.—I heard that my good Uncle is back, and I come to kiss his hand.

Max.—Welcome, my dear niece! You have grown tall and beautiful.

Hans von der Kolbe.—More of that some other time. Listen, Sidonia, today is an important one for you.

Sidonia (*Bashful and with lowered eyes*).—Ah, yes.

Hans von der Kolbe.—You know that today I am to make a choice from among your suitors.

Sidonia.—Ah, yes!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Have you thought it over?

Sidonia.—Ah, no.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Which one do you prefer?

Sidonia.—I have no preference.

Hans von der Kolbe.—You leave the choice all to me?

Sidonia.—That is my duty.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But if I said to you that you could have your own free will?

Sidonia.—Then I would ask you to permit me to become a nun.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Then you have no desire to marry?

Sidonia.—No.

Hans von der Kolbe.—But to go to a convent?

Sidonia.—Yes.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Will you never regret your decision?

Sidonia.—Ah, no.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Look me straight in the eyes just once.

Sidonia (*Does so*).—Oh, why has my father got such a horrid cap on?

Hans von der Kolbe.—It is a warm cap. My brother brought it with him. But to get back to the subject . . . if you really feel the holy urge . . .

Sidonia.—I? Not at all. I would much rather marry if only I did not have to take one of the three knights.

Hans von der Kolbe.—So? Have you perhaps another in mind?

Sidonia (*Confidentially*).—Well, really, young Edwin. I have long loved him in silence.

Max.—There you are!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Why have you not spoken anything to me about it?

Sidonia.—I was afraid that you might be angry, and because . . . because . . . a refined girl must be silent . . .

Hans von der Kolbe (*Quickly removing cap*).—Then why do you tell me now?

Sidonia (*Greatly terrified and hiding her face in her hands*).—Oh, my God, what have I done?

Max.—Be calm, dear child. Your father is a wise man and when he asks his nightcap for advice he will know at once just what he is to do.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Yes, yes, I do know. (*Calls.*) Hey, there, gentlemen!

Max.—They have lain down over there on the grass.

Hans von der Kolbe.—Whoever is in love, come here! Here stands my daughter and awaits the bridegroom.

(*The knights come running in.*)

All.—Here we are . . .

Hans von der Kolbe.—Edwin, are you there, too?

Edwin.—Ah, yes, I am here, too.

Konrad Pumper.—I have come only as an observer. Later, when the feasting comes I will enter into the festivities.

Erich Finsterwald (*Softly to* Hans).—Noble fellow . . .

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Magnanimous man . . .

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Beautiful singer . . .

Erich Finsterwald.—Keep me in mind . . .

Kaspar Blutstein.—You promised me . . .

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—I have your word . . .

(Hans *quietly puts on the cap again.*)

Erich Finsterwald (*Softly*).—Well, you old dunce, go on!

Kaspar Blutstein.—If we were only rid of you.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—And did not have to listen to your eternal rhymes.

(Hans *removes the cap.*)

Erich Finsterwald.—Your wisdom shall lead, not mine.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Your piety shall serve as my model.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Your songs shall inspire me.

(Hans *dons cap.*)

Erich Finsterwald.—You simpleton!

Kaspar Blutstein.—You old fool!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—You rotten poet!

Konrad Pumper.—What the devil is all the fuss about?

Hans von der Kolbe (*Removing cap*).—Gentlemen, just observe this cap.

Konrad Pumper.—It looks devilish shabby.

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—And has a queer shape.

Hans von der Kolbe.—When the prophet Elias was about halfway on his drive to heaven, he lost his cap. My brother brought it to me from Palestine.

Erich Finsterwald.—Send it to the nearest monastery as a relic.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Perhaps it covered a bottle of wine from the wedding at Canaan.

Konrad Pumper.—Is there wine in it still?

Hans von der Kolbe.—There is a peculiar property in this nightcap. Whoever wears it, to him everyone must say whatever he thinks, whether he wishes to or not.

Erich Finsterwald.—That would be the devil!

Kaspar Blutstein.—Unbelieveable!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—You are joking!

Konrad Pumper.—I almost believe that the cap has already been tested.

Hans von der Kolbe. (*Puts cap on* FINSTERWALD).—Try it once.

Kaspar Blutstein.—Ha! Ha! Ha! You are a bad fellow!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Your castle is a robber's nest.

Erich Finsterwald.—How? What?

(HANS *removes cap quickly and puts it on* BLUTSTEIN.)

Erich Finsterwald.—Ha! Ha! Ha! You poor toadier!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Your dining room is a frog's pond.

Kaspar Blutstein.—There the devil will . . .

(HANS *removes cap quickly and puts it on* KRUMMWINKEL.)

Kaspar Blutstein.—Ha! Ha! Ha! You parasite!

Erich Finsterwald.—Hypocritical rogue!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Are you out of your minds?

(HANS *takes off cap quickly.*)

Konrad Pumper.—By my poor soul, you are all three right.

Erich Finsterwald.—What is that?

Kaspar Blutstein.—What has happened to me?

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—Are we bewitched?

Hans von der Kolbe.—You have seen for yourselves the wonderful power of the cap, I have, also. I was wearing it on my head when you, one after the other, came to talk to me. Now you can perhaps imagine what flattering phrases came to my ear from your mouths. Therefore you will not be surprised that I do not give my daughter to one of you but to him whom, with the aid of the cap, I have found to be honest. Sidonia, the cap has also revealed you to me. Now go and cast yourself into Edwin's arms.

Edwin and Sidonia.—Is it possible? (*Rush into each other's arms.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Now receive my blessing.

Max.—And mine, too.

Erich Finsterwald.—The devil!

Kaspar Blutstein.—Death and hell!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Neighbors, do not trouble me any more with your visits.

Erich Finsterwald (*Snatches the cap*).—Here with that cursed cap!

Hans von der Kolbe.—Would you like to test it once?

Erich Finsterwald.—Brothers, let us take revenge. (*Throws cap on ground.*) Hack the cap into a thousand pieces. (*Draws his sword, others do likewise.*)

Kaspar Blutstein.—To it! To it!

Rudolph Krummwinkel.—To hell with the damned cap!

(*After they have cut it up the three exit.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Hey, there, gentlemen, you are all of the devil!

(PLUMPER *holds his sides with laughter.*)

Hans von der Kolbe.—Brother, brother, my wonderful cap!

Max.—Let things be, Hans. The cap of the prophet Elias is good for nothing in our world.

Hans von der Kolbe.—I believe you are right.

Konrad Pumper.—And have we no wine? Then let us drink. An honest tippler does not need to see such a nightcap on the head of a bad fellow to say the truth to him.

Max.—And think what would happen if all the great people wore such a nightcap!

Konrad Pumper.—And the honest men, eh?

CURTAIN

THE MODERN EPIC

A SPECULATION

By Harold King

It is frequently said that the epic is obsolete as an expression of contemporary western civilization. Modern writers have a range of choice in artistic forms far wider than the ancients had; but this one form, in which is enshrined so much of the best of old Europe, is definitely closed to them. Some three centuries ago Milton and Spenser, to mention English poets only, greatly influenced by the Greeks and Romans as they were, endeavored to rehabilitate the epic as a modern literary form. But Spenser failed almost completely; and Paradise Lost is in the nature of a tour-de-force. Other revivalists have achieved even less than these. How many people nowadays, for instance, know that there is such a poem as the Davideis? or who wrote it? or when? Of late years no considerable writer has attempted the form; for if Wordsworth's Prelude is courteously termed an epic, it is at most an epic by accident. The epic, we are told, is dead; for the same reason that the medieval romance is dead; and no modern writer can hope to revive either of them, particularly in writing of his own age.

What is the reason that the epic is said to be obsolete? The answer is ready, and at first convincing. The epic is obsolete because the civilizations which produced epics are obsolete. In the younger world it was inevitable; now it is impossible. It was a natural expression of what has since been named 'the heroic age,' when heroes themselves abode in this middle earth, when hero-worship was prevalent enough to satisfy even Carlyle, when myth-making tendencies were astir among the commonalty of men. For a few centuries after the passing of the heroic age the epic might survive as a literary form, but with the coming of modern civilization the temper of mind that gloried in grandiose heroic narrative was lost in a passion for verisimilitude and for the unadorned fact. Nowadays we have no heroes, in the epic sense; our hero-worship died at the birth of modern science; our myth-making tendencies have frozen in this cold age of stony truth.

But are these statements true? Are there no heroes? no hero-worshippers? Is the tendency to make myth so surely frozen? Assuredly our heroes are not like those of the old days; neither strength of arm nor dexterity in killing are now counted heroic qualities; we tend to belittle even the great warriors of history, and the war just ended brought more glory to the private soldiers as a body than to their leaders. Yet, to name *men* only, the nineteenth century produced Lincoln, Bismarck, and Garibaldi. These men were heroes, and the attitude of certain groups towards each of them is one of hero-worship. Moreover myth is already interpenetrating their historic fame. Going back beyond the nineteenth century the mythical element becomes more clear. The Napoleon myth is involved enough to baffle specialists; Nelson is a hero of schoolboy legend; while Washington is rapidly maturing, with the help of praise and belittlement, into a rival of pius Aeneas himself. Even the twentieth century has its hero. Lenin has been worshipped as a god in some places; while in others—a surer test—he has been a bogey to frighten adults, and will no doubt graduate into an accepted nightmare of the nursery.

Yet these men are hardly the real heroes of the modern world, founders of countries, generals, admirals, and bogies though they be. We know too much about even the most elusive of them to invest him with semi-deific or semi-demoniac qualities. We are too ready to call them geniuses, and the damnation of all heroes lies in that word genius. It is to be doubted if men are the heroes of the modern world at all. We are ready with "a willing suspension of disbelief" to accept the canonization of our remote forefathers, but we do not canonize anew for ourselves; at least, not men of whom we know that they were born and they died, hungered, thirsted, ate and drank, and—worst of all—wrote letters. Geniuses write letters, but not epic heroes. Our age not an age of individuals, and no individual can lift himself sufficiently above the commonplace, and for long enough periods, to attain to epic proportions. Our heroes are heroes for doing this thing or that, for this year or the next; they do not stir the general imagination to fervor all the time; and after a period the newspapers will relegate them to an inside page. Our age is not an age of individuals, but of institutions. In most fields of human endeavor we have accepted the fact that the institution possesses greater power than the sum of its members could possess, and a prospect of life sufficient for definite achievement.

In our day the man of action does not gird on his sword or take up his staff and scrip; he convenes a committee and has himself nominated its secretary. Whether we think it desirable or not, the institution is a fact of our civilization, and it is among institutions that we must look for the heroes of epics of our civilization.

Moreover, the hero should be in general typical of the civilization which produces the epic. He is a hero, not, because he is, as so many of our heroes are, in conflict with this, that, or the other in civilization, not because he is a revolutionary or reformer, but because he represents what that civilization accepts, in its daily practice rather than its more refined literature, as its own idealized type. He is the leader, the champion of his age, a hero because of his magnitude, not because of his differences. But where is the individual, even among our heroes, who could be accepted as the champion, the type of our civilization? Where shall we look for him? In what hiding? on what eminence? Who is the artist to imagine him?

I have sometimes stood in the concourse of one of the bigger railway stations to watch the people passing. There is an irresistible fascination in these hurrying and loitering figures, so many of them, all so different in dress and expression, each a little entity with its own hell and heaven. They are all human life, units of our sprawling civilization. Yet no one of them, magnified however greatly, would be typical of the rest of us; much less a potential champion of the ideas underlying our diverse life. Simplification would perhaps be a surer way than magnification to reach the type; and this was to a certain extent the method of the old epics. Yet now civilization has become so complex simplification would hardly be satisfactory. Our age is what it is largely by reason of the complexity and inter-dependence of life. To simplify it, as so many political theorists have discovered, is essentially to falsify it. To write an epic of our world in which character and action were simplified would be a grotesque begging of the question. The method of the older epics is denied to us, and for that reason we say the epic is obsolete.

It is not true. There is the typical figure, plainly to be seen, heroic, nakedly simple and beautiful. But it is not an individual. It is not the fermenting crowd. It is the vast concourse itself, spanning and enclosing individual and crowd. Men once made it, builded it after their imaginings and desires. They created it to be their servant, but it is no longer their handiwork. It has emancipated itself from servitude, and tolerates our confused sprawling across its floors with silent incuriousness. It has a vast life of its own, more typical of the life of our civilization than any man.

Yet a railway concourse is hardly the best example of the modern epic hero. In itself no building could be that. For all buildings are born into maturity; they do not grow from infancy to middle age. Building is not growth, but creation; and the spark of independent life does not come until architect and mason have left their work to its own silent meditations. Who could imagine the youth of the Grand Central? or the childhood of the Woolworth Tower? No! buildings are born, as Adam was, fully mature, with their faculties and their strength fully developed; and Adam is notoriously a poor epic hero for this reason. They do not learn, but go on existing; and their growth is a slow descent into age. The epic hero should have experienced, not omitted, his youth.

Rather do we find the epic hero in a living institution, a factory or a bank. They are typical of our civilization; they represent the ideas by which the world lives. They are heroic, with their magnificent strength and endurance; they have their own gods and worship; they play or struggle grimly among themselves, with a fierceness and cunning more than ever Hector or Achilles brought to battle. Above all they are alive, insistent with vast life; growing and developing; and who shall prophesy to what future they are speeding?

Let the epic writer of our generation go out into the industrial towns, and watch the sombre factories brooding over their food and their children! Let him see their cavernous mouths open to swallow the living men they love; or to spew forth those same men again, wearied, their sustenance digested into those capacious maws! Let him listen to the huge hammers pounding like gigantic teeth; watch the untiring wheels spinning in arterial life; penetrate to the very womb of the monster, where shadowy figures feed the red gaping vitals with coal, like priests of forgotten hierarchies weaving their mysterious and black rites in underground temples! Let him watch the ceaseless conception of children, here where the germs of life bubble in the innermost recesses of the parent body—ever new machines pouring out from this teeming factory! Men have made this monster, but it has passed beyond their mastery. No human strength or brains control it: rather it controls them, subduing them and digesting them into its own life, as we digest our food. Rarely it sleeps; all through the night it clamors for its food, and one awakens in solitary darkness to hear the jangling tongues bellowing their lusts and their hatreds. Sometimes men band together against the tyranny of one of them, and starve it to death by denying it their flesh and their brain. But others spring quickly up, trampling the corpse with their climbing feet. Men can only live by offering their lives to these insatiable monsters. Yet we say we control them, these magnificent, terrible giants who dominate our civilization. And remember, as you watch them, that their allotted span is not three score years and ten. Before we were, they were; and they will go on after we die, never pausing even in respect to the passing of our mightiest men.

Better still, go into a bank, the intellectual of this epic life in which the factories are crude animal laborers, slaves to the banks as they are never slaves to men. To the unseeing eye a bank is only an impressive building, a hall with rows of little windows, strong-rooms, vaults, quiet, accurate men and women. But listen for a moment to its throbbing heart. One might be in the midst of a gigantic brain, standing aghast and dwarfish, like Jonah in the whale's belly. The clicking machines are the very brain-cells functioning; money flows like blood through its wide arteries. Watch its tendrils spreading over the world in slow, octupus-like growth, carrying with them the comforts and damnations of our civilization to its four corners. See them joining with other such tendrils, like climbing ivy, slowly stifling the tall oak which supports them. Like the factory the bank is alive; it is relentless, cruel, and its food is humanity. Men once made it, but it has passed beyond their mastery. No man, no nation can exterminate this life. One body may be thrown down and stamped out of existence. But before breathing has ceased its ravening kindred will be fastening on it, drawing fresh life to themselves from its prostrate body. This life we have created we can not destroy. Factories and banks will go on, not till men grow tired or become afraid of them but until nature, less remorseful, more cruel even than themselves, evolving always fresh forms of life, throws them aside as obsolete, in favor of some new monster she has created. Would you see the unwrought material for a modern epic? Study the history of a great international bank. Follow it through its slow growth; let your imagination see it in its crises, its catastrophes, its achievements, its sicknesses, the getting of its children; look forward if you will to its death, triumphant amidst hounding adversaries, or slowly rotting of internal disease; listen to the talk of those who have known it intimately, its directors, its clerks, and its depositors, and notice especially how it has become for them a mystic removed presence, a veiled god whose shrine is everywhere and nowhere; live with it, understand it, venerate it, if you can love and worship it; in so doing you will be realizing the protagonist of the modern epic. For these are the heroes of our modern world, our warriors, our ideals.

The artistic form of the modern epic is more speculative, but concerning that a word may be added in conclusion. Up to the present it has been generally accepted that the epic should be written in the most majestic verse form the language of its creators has evolved. Yet perhaps Fielding was nearer the truth than he is generally allowed to be when he defined the novel as a "comic epic in prose." For him the use of prose was occasioned by the comic intention, and he would not have considered it as a medium for serious epic. Yet since the eighteenth century prose has developed so much, has been put to such variety of uses, has acquired such a venerable tradition, that few modern writers would hesitate to use it for an epic subject. And assuredly Fielding had grasped the central fact that modern life has become too variegated to be represented with any degree of completeness in the more narrow and direct unity of the poem or the drama. Without doubt the difficulty of representing the complexity of modern life in art was one of the underlying causes of the emergence of the novel; and since the same difficulty would have to be met in the modern epic, one might speculate that in outward form it would resemble the novel as the old epic the narrative poem. Students of the modern novel will probably call to mind experiments indicating development in this direction.

The epic, however, can not chiefly represent complexity and variety. The modern epic must represent complexity because modern life is essentially complex; but the epic itself must be nakedly simple. Modern life must be represented so that its larger unities, not its minor confusions, carry the main emphasis. It is to be doubted whether the novel, with its sense of progression rather than perspective, can satisfactorily portray this complexity in unity; whether the moving picture has not already developed a surer technique in the handling of large masses, not as masses, but as units. One might speculate again that the modern epic will be the creation of some genius of the film. Those who can imagine such pictures as The Covered Wagon or The Iron Horse, purged of certain littlenesses introduced ostensibly for human interest, may get a clear suggestion of what the modern epic will be.

I remember once standing in Fifth Avenue about midnight, when there was not another human being in sight. Automobiles were speeding up and down, but I caught no glimpse of their occupants. The alternation of red and green in the streetlight-houses, and the consequent checking and releasing of movement, seemed independent of human mind or human will. The scene was as mysterious as anything I have ever known. I must have stood a full half-hour, lost in the wonder and majesty of this gigantic immobility, hardly rippled by the changing rectangular thin lines of traffic. After a while it seemed that veils were lifted from my eyes, and I saw with a new perception. No longer were the silent buildings empty shells, lacking human control; but beautiful giants of our new world, grim and terrible, possessing infinite latent strength to create or destroy, and beautiful, supremely beautiful. Men had abandoned the city; and the giants they had made sat in silent conclave, debating how they should use this new freedom from irksome pettinesses. Their silent speech merged into the silent darkness; they seemed to challenge the immensity of silent stars, and the grey mystery of night itself, to join with their confident strength. They sat in the tenantless city like Druids in a titanic Stonehenge. Deep called unto deep; and the very air was astir with their dim religious awe, with secret counsels that knew no speech. And I thought to myself that if a man with an artist's shaping power could have seen as it was given to me to see at that moment, then assuredly the first of our modern epics, the epic of New York, had been conceived.

TROPICS

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Clifford M. Montague

Characters

Judson
Davis
Hodson
Morrill

(*The scene is laid in the burning desert country of mid-India. Four men, three of them government employees, are sitting on a porch. The fourth man is a visitor. The porch is all that can be seen of the house; jutting out at the extreme right. In the front is a door, leading into the house. Directly in front of it three steps leading down to the sand. Slanting off into the distanc, towards the left-rear, is nothing but sand, sand, sand. Even the stage is strewn with it, giving the effect of sand right up to the porch. At the rear of the porch stands a single moringa tree; its branches poking out a little in front of the porch. On the porch are four chairs—all rockers. In the midst of them a stand holding several bottles of gin, scotch and soda can be seen; also three glasses. Where the eaves of the porch jutt out is a screen sun-shade; now rolled up. All the men except Hodson have on white muftis; their trousers are soiled and seem to have been worn a long time without cleaning. Their sleeves are rolled up and their collars are thrown open with their ties pulled down.* Hodson *has on white riding breeches and dark leather boots. All of them have on pith helmets.*)

Morrill.—Have one, anybody? (*He pours a drink for himself with a shaky hand.*)

Hodson.—Hitting it pretty heavy, aren't you, Morry?

Morrill.—Got to. This damn heat, you know . . . (*He grins a bit sheepishly.*)

Judson.—Morry's right. I got to have one, myself. (*He gets up and pours himself a bit of scotch.*)

Davis.—Ought to leave it alone, you fellows; it only makes you hotter.

Morrill.—I know it; yet what else is there to do?

Judson.—But go on with your story, Davis.

Davis.—Oh, there's not much more to tell. Only we got the guy later. Well, he hung for it.

Hodson (*Shuddering*).—Hell of a death, that!

Davis.—Yes. (*Then, after a moment.*) Yes, you're right.

Judson.—About the worse there is, I guess.

Davis.—Right, too.

Morrill (*Nervously*).—For god's sake change the subject! Here in this god-forsaken desert and all you talk about is death, death, death! Can't you think of something else, that will cheer up this place instead of making it more horrible?

Hodson.—Just your nerves, Morry. You've been drinking too much; you'll be all right in the morning.

Morrill (*Shuddering, then, as in augury*).—I'll . . . I'll feel hell in the morning.

Hodson (*Irritably*).—Well, leave the stuff alone, then.

Judson.—Oh for Christ sake, Hodson, lay off. Just because you don't drink don't think others shouldn't. Wait till you've been out here longer and God knows you'll turn to it too.

Hodson (*Forcibly*).—You're crazy; I won't!

Morrill (*Laughingly*).—That's what they all say! Why, I remember . . . (*He stops, uncertainly.*)

Davis (*Laughing*).—Remember, remember! God yes, that's what they all say! But they forget soon enough . . . when they've been out here long enough . . . (MORRILL *looks a him oddly for a moment.* DAVIS *stares back at him coldly.* MORRILL *shudders, then pours the last of the gin for himself and downs it. Then he rises.*)

Morrill.—I'm goin' in to get more gin. I'll be out in a moment. (*He enters the house.*)

Hodson (*After a moment*).—God, I can't make him out!

Davis (*Looking at him*).—You can't, eh? Well, I can!

Judson.—Oh you're both crazy: what can you make out from a man who drinks?

Davis (*Quietly*).—A damn lot, I say.

Hodson.—Why, what?

Davis.—Well, a past, for one thing! Oh you don't need to look at me like that! But just think . . . Morrill never showed up out here until three years ago; and Judson picked him up in Jhudapore, he did. Broke, flat busted, and down and out he was, and not a hope in the world. Judson gave him this job—mind you, he got the job when he was down here, the government didn't send him out . . . . and what damn fool would come to this god-forsaken place if he didn't have a past?

Hodson.—Oh, I don't know as that means . . . .

Davis.—Well, I do!—Wait and see . . .

Judson (*Suddenly aware of a different meaning in* Davis' *voice*).—What d'ye mean, Davis? What d'ye mean . . wait and see?

Davis.—Oh, nothing; never mind. But I got a story to tell you . . . (Morrill *appears in the doorway and is about to step onto the porch but stops. Something in the strained, tensed atmosphere conducts to him that he has been the subject of their discussion. He waits, standing quietly, in the doorway, a bottle of Gordon Gin in his hand.*)

Davis.—Well, I got a surprise for you; may as well tell you now as later, I suppose. You see, I'm a Scotland Yarder. (*The others start at this and look at him queerly; but at a loss as to what that should have to do with them.* Morrill *half-turns as if he would run, thinks better of it, smiles and takes a deep draught from the bottle.*)

Davis.—And I'm here, I might as well say now, to get a man. We Yarders always do, you know. (*The last dryly.*)

Hodson.—But, . . . but . . . but what in the world . . . would . . .

Davis.—Wait. I'll tell you a story. It started a long time ago; in a little cottage in Surrey—down near Dorking, it was. And a damn fine place it was, too. Well, an artist fellow had the place . . . used it as his home and studio, too, he did. And god, he was an artist! Could paint and draw, he could. And great! But he was only a starter then, see? He had just begun to paint and draw pictures and having them sold and hung in galleries then. (Morrill, *at this, turns a little pale. He looks queerly about him, wildly, hurriedly. Then, seeing that the others do not see him there, he gets quieter—almost dangerously quiet. He takes off his pith and moves his hand across his forehead slowly. Then he takes a long drink from the bottle. Several times he does that during the ensuing scene. Near the end of Davis' monologue the last rays of the sinking sun burst under the eaves of the porch and strike him fully on the forehead.*)

Davis.—Well, this artist got along fine, he did. Fine until one day a woman stepped in. There's always a woman, you know. Always! (*The last to show the others that he knows all about things.*) But then, this woman wasn't to blame. No, not this one. But she and this artist fellow got along fine for a while. Married too, they did. But it was then that things began to happen. You see the artist fellow thought that being the great artist that he was gave him the right to have more freedom than others had. Nothing bad about him, you understand; but just those same ideas that other artist fellows have always had. Well, what happened was only natural. The woman found it out and made a fuss. Natural, that, too. You see, by now she was due to have a child soon. Their first one, too; and it would have meant a lot to them. They loved each other, you understand; they really did even if he did have some queer ideas. But this fellow was temperamental, too; just like the other kind. Well, they had a quarrel. Devil of a one it must have been too; 'cause the fellow got so angry, so damned angry that he struck his wife and knocked her against the wall. Well, she dropped; dropped like a load of bricks and this fellow . . . poor chap . . . . thought he'd killed her—and sure enough— (MORRILL *starts, blinks uncertainly about him with unfamilarity. He tries to brush something from in front of his eyes—he is unsuccessful. He drops his helmet and bottle, which, by now, is empty; grabs his forehead and plunges out onto the porch.* DAVIS *stops talking quickly.* MORRILL *gazes at the others with a queer look in his eyes—half insanely. He rushes down the steps and onto the sand. Then he starts to laugh, wildly, hollowly and cynically; at the same time trying alternately to pull the hair out of his head, and to brush something from his face. He drules over his chin, and stares about him with a childish imbecility . . . as a half-wit.*)

Judson (*Jumping to his feet*).—Gawd A'mighty! He's gone mad! (DAVIS *and* HODSON *jump to their feet and all three of them rush to* MORRILL. *They grab him, and he fights them. For several minutes they fight; then kicking, biting, swearing and blubbering, they down him on his back.*)

Judson (*Breathing hard*).—Le Cafard! I'll be damned!

Hodson.—You don't . . . you don't mean . . . "Tropics"?

Judson.—Yes, you fool!

Davis.—Chrayst! What can we do with him? (MORRILL *whimpers and then screams—bloodcurdlingly.*)

Judson.—He's got it damn bad, too!

Hodson.—Christ! We'll have to do something! I can't stand that damn screetching. (MORRILL *tries to scratch his eyes out.* JUDSON *grabs his hands and holds them down.* MORRILL *blubbers like a baby.*)

Hodson.—The damn fool! He should have known better'n to drink in this heat!

Judson.—Damn lot of good that does now! Come on, we'll take him to bed somehow. Have to tie him there, I guess. (*The three of them pinion* MORRILL'S *arms behind him and half walking, half-dragging him they get him up the steps and to the doorway.* MORRILL, *while they are doing this, screams and whimpers in turn. Then he shouts and curses like a wild man and tries to claw them. Then they get him thru the door. For a full moment the stage is empty. Then* HODSON *and* DAVIS *come out, wiping their foreheads with their handkerchiefs. They sink heavily into their chairs.*)

Hodson.—God! but it's horrible!

Davis.—It's sure bad; Christ! D. T.'s and Le Cafard at the same time! Hell!

Hodson (*Faintly*).—Do you think . . .?

Davis.—Hell, no! No man could . . . (MORRILL'S *screams can again be heard and they are quiet. Then he stops and nothing can be heard.*)

Hodson (*Jumping to his feet; pacing about*).—Jesus! I can't stand it! I'll go crazy myself!

Davis (*Going to the liquor stand; sees all the bottles empty*).—Hell, I was wishin' a drink now . . .

Hodson.—There's some gin in there (*He points to the house.*) wait, I'll get it . . . (*He enters thru the doorway, is gone for a moment then comes back with a full bottle of Gordon's.*)

Davis (*Pouring a drink*).—Have some?

Hodson.—No thanks. (*A pause.*) Yes, dammit, I will! This'd drive a man nuts . . . (*They both drink.*)

Davis (*Setting his glass down—drily*).—It settles a man's nerves all right.

Hodson (*After a pause*).—God! but he's awful quiet now! Do you suppose . . .

Davis (*Evading*).— . . . I . . . I hope not . . .

Hodson (*Heatedly*).—You hope not! Hell of a lot of good that does!

Davis (*Turning*).—Well, a hell of a lot of good anything does . . . (*Then adds, lamely.*) . . . now . . .

Hodson (*Wretchedly*).—I can't stand it! God! (*He turns to the doorway.*) I've got to find out . . . (*He starts to go, then* JUDSON *appears in the doorway.*) What . . . what . . . how is he?

Judson (*Dully*).—Went just like that he did! (*He snaps his fingers.*)

Hodson (*Shrinking back*).—Christ!

Judson.—Couldn't do a thing. The D. T.'s finished him. Might have pulled thru, too, with just the tropics. (*He puts his hand on* HODSON'S *shoulder—seeing how pale he is.*) Buck up, man. God A'mighty! this is just one of the things . . . (*He stops a moment uncertainly.*) . . . out here . . .

Hodson (*A catch in his voice*).—Damned decent sort he was, too. (*He goes to the stand and pours a drink and gulps it down.*)

Davis (*Suddenly*).—That reminds me: I didn't finish my story.

Hodson (*Bitingly scathing*).—You'd be telling stories again? Stories after just what happened to . . . (*His voice gets faint.*) . . . to . . . him . . ?

Davis (*Cold-bloodedly*).—Well, now's as good a time as any, I guess.

Hodson (*Sinking in his chair*).—God! I give up!

Davis (*Going ruthlessly on*).—Well, you see this woman wasn't killed; no, just knocked the wind out of her, he did. But he, he thought he'd killed her; and he run away. Beat it clean, he did; never touched a thing—or her—Just beat it. Well, the woman came to and wasn't hurt a bit—nor was (*He stops a moment.*) . . . nor was the kid. Yes, she reported it to us Yarders—wanted him back, she did. But that was three years ago. And I got my last letter from her here. She said she still wanted him back—was dyin' to see him—and so was Mary . . . that's the kid, see? They was still livin' in the little cottage in Surrey—livin' off the royalties his pictures was bringin' in.

But that's not the hell of it, see? Cause that artist fellow was Morrill, in there—and I was here to tell him that he didn't kill her—I was here to take him back . . .

(*He points to thedoorway and then lets his arm drop. There is a still quiet for a moment, then* DAVIS *reaches over tothe stand and pours three drinks. He hands a glass to each of them and* JUDSON *and* DAVIS *gulp theirsdown.*)

Hodson (*In a tone of awe*).—Christ . . .! (*For a moment he looks wildly at the other two, then glances at the glass in his hand, oddly, queerly, then with a bitter, mocking laugh he gulps it down as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

WAS IBSEN ORIGINAL?

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL AND HENRIK IBSEN

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

By A. Alexander Enna, B. A., M. A.,

Fundamentally, Hebbel and Ibsen were natures of the same soil, both austere, quiet natures of the North. Their youth and the most important years of youthful development were evenly handicapped through misfortune, which left a life-long stamp of bitterness in their souls. Both were of the Northern race, with its dominating will power and capacity for endurance; both fought the same uneven battle with long drawn poverty—living in depressing environment—and both reached, through sheer will power, the final success.

But it is all these reverses during youth which in sensitive poetic souls like these two men are apt to twist the inborn gift into a very pessimistic channel where strength may turn into rancour. Luckily this did not happen to either Hebbel or Ibsen; but with both, it left its impression. Both drew their material from the base and sad elements in society; both held up to our eyes pictures of society's abnormal, dismal, often hideous phases. They viewed the world from the bottom upward, and saw but very little light above. This relationship of a common background would naturally create a literary production of the same tendency.

Hebbel, however, was fifteen years older than Ibsen. His bitter, unusually severe, and trying experiences became to him the very material upon which he based his dramas. "Maria Magdalena" is easily traced as an almost complete diary of a certain part of Hebbel's life. Hebbel was, therefore, distinctly original. The creator in him only stimulated the critic, and his various treatises show that his dramas have been built on deep philosophical foundations. This is a point of the greatest importance in this connection: the great originality of Hebbel and his definite philosophical point of view which was back of all characters of his drama. There was only one Hebbel—one Maria Magdalena, one Mariamne, one Agnes Bernauer; and when we, in Ibsen, find identically the same tendency in philosophy, the same women characters displayed throughout his dramas, then we better understand what Ibsen must have meant when he called Hebbel his "predecessor."

There were two things which impressed Hebbel most about humanity: first, the individual will; and secondly, the relation of the unit to the whole—the fight of the individual against the state, against institutions. Again and again we meet this very point of view in Ibsen. Hebbel gives us Klara in "Maria Magdalena," and Mariamne, and Rhodope as examples of his philosophy, but that is exactly the problem of Nora Helmer in "A Doll's House"—that very awakening of woman to the rights of personality, the problem that so many believe Ibsen "invented." We find it first in the woman character Selma in "The League of Youth," but we find it constantly back of most of the women characters throughout Ibsen's plays.

In drawing a comparison between the women characters of Hebbel and of Ibsen the influence seems so evident, so undoubtedly strong that Ibsen seems to stand more as a vehicle of a movement than as a great individual. When Ibsen's art stands by itself, it seems indeed little more than a wonderfully dexterous adaptation.

Ibsen's idealization of the submissive woman cannot be but a direct influence from Hebbel. Ibsen could not have met her anywhere but in Hebbel. Agnes in "Brand," with the halo of maternal love and unselfish devotion to the austere Brand; Solveig, renouncing the world to wait for her worthless Peer Gynt; Hedvig in "The Wild Duck," dying in poignant grief because the ideal of her father was shattered.

Hebbel's woman is mainly a personification of his philosophical principle, and the whole background of his dramas is built on the foundation of his philosophy. Ibsen discovers in Hebbel's woman the woman of the future, and with great foresight he adopts her and places her in a "milieu" of modern life. He lifts this new found woman high up so everybody can see her, and embodies her with high moral qualities. In "Lady Inger," Niels Lykke says: "A woman is the most powerful thing on earth; in her hands it lies to lead the man where God would have him." She becomes the great moraliser like Lena Hessel in "Pillars of Society," who avenges the wrong she suffers by forcing Berwick to break the evil of lies and deceit.

Hebbel is never far away in Ibsen. We are constantly meeting the problem and attitude of Hebbel's Klara, Judith, and Mariamne in practically all of Ibsen's women.

Considering Ibsen's Nora in "A Doll's House," and Mariamne in Hebbel's "Herodot and Mariamne," we feel both exemplifying the great test of what will happen. While Mariamne is waiting for Herodot's action in his second trial, she decides he shall find her just as he thinks she really is. In crazed despair she arranges the feast, the dance where she dances to welcome her husband—and death. Her soul is wounded and she wishes death since her very life is laid waste—her very nature deprived of its right to unfold. Ibsen's Nora goes through the same anxieties, the same soul-tortures, while waiting to see how Helmer will take her deceit; and Nora like Mariamne seeks an outlet for her despair in arranging a dance—the famous Tarantella.

Mariamne's decision of self-destruction is dictated by love for Herodot; Nora's motive for her deceit is dictated by love for Helmer. It is the very same sentiments, and the emotions in these two women which revolt against cruelty, the lack of understanding, the lack of faith in the two men Herodot and Helmer, and which finally cause the tragedy. The two women's standpoint towards the two men respectively is absolute defiance. The idealistic, refined soul of woman has been mortally hurt.

There are two distinct motives mentioned by Ibsen and involved in both situations. The first is "the great unpardonable sin," which is the sin of killing love in man; and the second is man's violation against woman's right to make her choice—"her own free will." It is easy to read both in Mariamne's actions and attitude; and when they are so evident in Ibsen's women characters, it is undoubtedly because Ibsen has read them in Mariamne.

The tragic outcome in "Herodot and Mariamne" is due to the fact that Herodot, in his raving jealousy, does not give Mariamne any opportunity to show him that she was ready at any time to die for him of her own free will. When we consider how emphatically Ibsen at all times stresses the free will action of woman, it is evident that a similarity like this could hardly have occurred in any other way but through influence from Hebbel.

It is interesting to note that Ibsen uses the very same means of diversion as Hebbel in dance and music as a cover of excitement before crucial moments. In "A Doll's House," Nora says:

> "Now play for me! I am going to dance."

And a little later in the same act, Nora says:

> "We will have champagne, Helen."

It is as if one hears Mariamne's voice in "Herodot and Mariamne"

> "Ich selbst gebe zur Nacht ein Fest—und tanze dort."

In "Hedda Gabler," Hedda retires to an inner apartment and plays wildly a dance on the piano—just before shooting herself.

"Maria Magdalena" with its everyday atmosphere, its strong spirit of reality, its depressing surroundings and theme, stands as the most direct forerunner to the Ibsen type of social plays. We need not seek far in Ibsen's work for a striking parallel. The garret atmosphere in "The Wild Duck" is strongly related to "Maria Magdalena." The spirit of the "claim of the ideal" is forever hovering in the background of both plays. The wild duck is present in both plays—in Klara and in Gina. And Hebbel's Mariamne, Klara, and Agnes are everlastingly present in Nora, Ellida, and Mrs. Alving. In "Maria Magdalena," it is Leonhard, Klara's seducer, who, referring to Klara's predicament, says:

> "There are thousands of girls who have gone through that before you—and there will be thousands after you."

One can scarcely hear that without hearing at the same time Nora's voice:

> "It is a thing hundreds of thousands of women have done."

During her last conversation with Leonhard in "Maria Magdalena," Klara says:

> " . . . If I had no right ever to do such a thing, how should I be able to do it?"

And again in "The Doll's House," we hear the echo of the same voice when Nora says:

> "It appears that a woman has no right to spare her dying father or to save her husband's life!—I do not believe that—I must make up my mind which is right—society or I."

Torvald's attitude to Nora in holding the law above justice, above his love for her seems rather improbable, rather lacking in reality. It seems as if Ibsen in this particular situation has rather forcibly given room for that theory which was not his but Hebbel's, the individual's right against the state.

We may also draw a very striking resemblance between Rhodope in Hebbel's "Gyge and his Ring," and Nora in "A Doll's House." Here as there the slumbering dreamy soul of a wife, who accepts life as something to be taken for granted, wakes up to independent activity and experience. Here as there the husband believes that in her he has a possession with which he may do as he likes, and he has to make grievous atonement for his error. In both dramas the right of the wife to respect for her peculiar nature is maintained and finally gains victory.

In Hebbel's "Julia," the resemblance to Ibsen is still more striking. "Julia" like "Ein Trauerspiel in Sicilien" is intended to reflect Italian conditions before 1848. The heroine finds herself in the same condition as Klara in Hebbel's middle-class tragedy; her father, like Master Anton, considers himself a just man, but the solution of the problem is complicated because other factors play a part. The note of responsibility to the coming generation is already struck in the play when the Count Bertram, shattered in health by excess, declares that marriage between "life" and "death"—between healthy youth and worn-out debility, is the "mother of ghosts." Thus there sounds in our ears not only the subject, but even the title of one of the most significant of Ibsen's works. The complete background of "Emperor and Gallilean" is the same as that of Hebbel's "Herodot and Mariamne": the irresistible oncoming of new influence—the amalgamation of paganism and Christianity, the combination of individualism and socialism—"The Third Kingdom," as Ibsen calls it.

Hebbel recognized art as symbolic, but unlike the symbolist, he made the character itself the symbol. In "Herodot and Mariamne," the entrance of The Three Kings is an example of this theory. In Ibsen, this type of "living symbolism" plays a very important part. In practically all of his social plays he uses symbolism. In "The Wild Duck", we find this tendency well illustrated. In "The Lady of the Sea," the stranger appears in person on the stage representing Ellida's yearning for the sea. Plays like "The Masterbuilder" and "Hedda Gabler" are nothing but symbolism from beginning to end. It is an idea of which Ibsen is making the very most throughout his dramas. The tendency to mysticism and to superstition which we find in Ibsen's earlier plays is an influence of his native environment. Presentations like the white horse in "Rosmerholm," Peer Gynt's dream on his home voyage—all are superstitions easily understood in connection with a people like the Norwegian.

But Symbolism is an art, one which is influenced through outside sources. It is an art which can be found in earlier literature quite extensively; but when Ibsen applies Symbolism in just that form (represented in actual characters on the stage, characters who form a part of the cast proper—as presented by Hebbel), it seems justified to conclude that he is making use of it because he has seen its effectiveness in Hebbel.

PRAYER

By Fredericka Blankner

One little word to sing before I die,
God, it is all I ask,—You who have given
To others epic canticles. Must I
Be always silent? Mute can I know heaven
With songs behind my lips that beg me? Why
Make You the aching chaos of desire
Without the power? Omnipotent, O try
To give Your power where You have given Your fire.

Would fire and power in single spirit lame
Through over-leaping, could I humbly know,
Once for a trice, Your joy when You bestow
Your likeness on a sphere of perfect flame?

With Heaven so full of cherubim and song,
God, spare me one! I will not keep it long.

THE DAGGER OF THE GOTH

By Jose Zorrilla

Translated by Willis Knapp Jones

CHARACTERS

Romano, *a hermit monk*
Theudia, *a Gothic noble*
Don Roderick, *Lost King of the Goths*
Count Julian

The action takes place in the Desert of Pederneira, Mount Saint Miguel, near the city of Viseo, Portugal, the night of Sept. 9, 719. The scene is the interior of a cabin of the hermit, Romano. Its roof is upheld at the center of the room by a wooden post or tree trunk, at the foot of which are two seats. At the right is a tiny hearth, set beneath a hole in the roof which allows the smoke to escape. There are other rude seats. At the left is a door into another room which the hermitage must be supposed to have. Another door, at the back, is open and through it may be seen the mountain, when lit by flashes of lightning. As the curtain rises, flashes of lightning can be seen and thunder heard. A fire on the hearth and a torch light the scene.

Hermit.—What storm is this that threatens! God preserve me in such a night. This light is going out. And such a cold drizzle! What majesty one must impute to God in this solitude! From whom except from Him do the tempests receive their breath? Whose is the terrible accent and the resplendence which gleams when the angry wind hums and the zenith is filled with lighting? Who cleaves rocks and trees with the swift thunderbolt like a reaper, leveling the grain with his scythe? Who but God who sits serenely above the heavens when in the clouds reverberates the clamor of the hoarse thunder? Lord, who from the heights of Thy omnipotence seest the poor creatures groveling at Thy feet, let Thy wrath be appeased, and, God of goodness, calm Thy just fury if Thou art breathing out passion against the work of They affection. Thou wast able to make it in an instant and Thy great power can in another instant destroy it, if such is Thy will; but consider, O God, that so will Thou serve equally him who impiously forsakes Thee and him who bows before thee. (*There is a short pause*) But so long a delay surprises me and I am worrying about him. Why did he leave my cabin on so cruel an afternoon? May the Holy Virgin protect me! If it rains any harder how can he with sure foot ascend by the path the rough slope of this ravine? Poor fellow, how he must have suffered in the world. How great must be his grief profound, and how he has repented! But I hear steps. (*He rises and goes to the door.*) It seems to me some one is coming now—Come in quickly, for the storm increases. (*Enter* Theudia, *closely muffled.*)

Theudia.—Thanks.

Hermit.—But who seek refuge in this hut?

Theudia.—A gentlemen. (*He removes his wraps. They look at each other a moment.*) You seem surprised. What's the matter, my good man?

Hermit.—And would you have me unsurprised that you have come here?

Theudia.—It shows unbounded fear for man to have, like a stork, a home on the tip of this craggy cliff.

Hermit.—My vows have brought me to this lonely wilderness.

Theudia.—You are a monk. Oh, then forgive my words if they have given you offense.

Hermit.—No, not at all. I came to this mountain never thinking that strangers would ever find me.

Theudia.—If I annoy you—

Hermit.—God take such a thought from me! I shall be as satisfied to have you here as you are to remain.

Theudia.—That I shall be. In my campaigns I've passed a thousand nights in worse quarters.

Hermit.—Oh, you're a soldier?

Theudia.—I have been. Now I've left my native land.

Hermit.—The war has brought you weariness?

Theudia.—No, we were conquered, thanks to infamous traitors, and fleeing I escaped my fate of living a slave with my fierce conquerors.

Hermit.—But to flee—

Theudia.—Stop, old man! Against them was the banner raised, and I go anywhere a Christian goes defending it; but I am weary. Have you aught to eat?

Hermit.—Dried fruit is all that I can give you. I can't provide a feast.

Theudia.—I am frugal.

(*The* Hermit *places before him fruit and a glass of water. He drinks and eats.*)

Hermit.—Well, then, eat it. Take this seat. Give me your cape that I may hang it up.

Theudia.—That so you treat me makes my heart rejoice, but I—

Hermit.—No, warm yourself. For certainly you need it.

Theudia.—Thou good old man. In truth I do.

(*The* Hermit *goes and looks out, for the door is open.*)

Theudia.—But what are you doing? Why don't you close that door? Can't you see it has begun to rain, and that no one can stand that wind?

Hermit.—Yes, that is just what saddens me.

Theudia.—But what have we to fear?

Hermit.—Nothing. I am worried, if you would have the truth, about a friend.

Theudia.—Is he out there?

Hermit.—Yes.

Theudia.—He must be at home upon that fearful path.

Hermit.—Oh, poor man! I do not know. God grant skill to his feet.

Theudia.—What, doesn't he know the road?

Hermit.—Not always.

Theudia.—Then he must be a fool, indeed.

Hermit.—Refer to him with more respect because even though today he is unfortunate, he is not one born to be the object of scorn.

Theudia.—I beg your forgiveness.

Hermit.—Let's speak no more of it. But know that you have done no harm.

Theudia.—If you think, perhaps it would avail, we might go down that path to bear him aid.

Hermit.—It is not necessary. All human aid would be offered in vain, but we are aware of it. (*He goes to the door again.*)

Theudia (*Aside*).—Can I have erred and come to blunder into the cave of a bandit? Let us see—good sir?

Hermit.—Coming back).—What?

Theudia.—Being a soldier, I am somewhat of a talker and filled with curiosity. Tell me, then, if I am not offensive with my questions, since that man for whom you look is a friend, why are you worried that he will not find the path?

Hermit.—Because he is well capable, if his madness drive him to it, to open the sepulchre at the bottom of this abyss.

Theudia.—Good heavens! Then he is insane?

Hermit.—Memory of the past so upsets him that sometimes a cruel fever, a mad delirium overtakes him, and I find no human remedy to put an end to it. And yet either I am mistaken or no unusual fit has come upon him for a year. I fear he'll suffer one today.

Thedia.—And have you learned why?

Hermit.—He keeps profoundest silence about what he suffered in the world to cause him this keen sensation.

Theudia.—You rouse my curiosity. He must be a man of some importance.

Hermit.—He has not mentioned even his name to me.

Theudia.—Padre, are you jesting?

Hermit.—No, indeed. Five years ago he came here asking aid in his deep grief. He was next door to death. But he was cured at last and he had no desire to return to the world, living in these confining quarters an exemplary life. Oh, if he does not earn pardon with so penitent a life, I don't know who the human being is who may have hopes of it.

Theudia.—But did you not say he was insane?

Hermit.—His illness left him very weak, and somewhat touched his brain. And when his melancholy does not lie upon him, he is a man in whom is found much valor, much understanding. But when his disease attacks him, oh, then he goes to extremes.

Theudia.—But has he never told you—?

Hermit.—Never, and if our conversation touches upon his history, at once he trembles and is blanched. It seems as if a spectre in his memory is conjured up.

Theudia.—It is a curious case, I vow, and worthy of deep study. What does he do when he is insane?

Hermit.—He has a horrible mania. He has a dagger always hanging from his belt. He says it is accursed and threatens his existence. And when he goes insane he cries fearfully: "With this traitorous dagger I am to be killed!"

Theudia.—I swear to God 'tis strange. And do his spells come on him regulary or on stated day?

Hermit.—Today is one, the most terrible that he has had.

Theudia.—Today?

Hermit.—So is my worry greater.

Theudia.—Do you know whether this man is a native of this land?

Hermit.—Portugese? I think not.

Theudia.—By heaven; if he were Spanish, one could understand his dementia.

Hermit.—But what has that malady to do with today?

Theudia.—Today is a day of gall, of mourning, reproach and rage for unhappy Spain. And woe to him who was cause of it! But let us speak of other things. Are you Portuguese?

Hermit.—I am, but for eleven years I've lived here apart.

Theudia.—And do you never feel an urge to know what happens in the world?

Hermit.—The world you speak of gave me grief unmeasured and little pleasure so that the days of my years in it I counted as deceit and I flee it.

Theudia.—And you gain—?

Hermit.—But hush. I hear a sound in the underbrush Who's there?

Roderick (*Outside*).—I, brother.

Theuda.—Is that he?

Hermit.—Here he is. (*Enter* RODERICK, *wrapped in a sort of long tunic. He seems distrait, as though meditating.*)

Hermit.—You had me worried over you.

Roderick.—Thanks.

Hermit.—Were you lost?

Roderick.—No.

Hermit.—Did you see the storm gathering?

Roderick.—Yes.

Hermit.—And where did you go?

Roderick.—I know not.

Hermit.—I wonder if you are cold.

Roderick.—A little.

Hermit.—Warm yourself then.

Roderick.—I shall. (*As he approaches the fire, he sees* THEUDIA *who listens with back turned.*)

Roderick (*Aside to* HERMIT).—But who is this with you?

Hermit.—A traveler who came but a little while ago.

Roderick.—But who is he?

Hermit.—I don't know.

Roderick.—Trust no man. Duplicity and treason does the man most noble and worthy shelter in his heart.

Hermit.—But see—

Roderick.—I know what I say. Ask this man his business and I shall see whether he is friend or enemy.

Hermit.—Of ours? Why? Whom have we ever offended?

Roderick.—We all sin. Go speak to him.

Hermit.—I shall.

Theudia (*Aside*).—I don't like the mysteriousness with which these two talk. I shall be on my guard, for this may be serious. (RODERICK *approaches the fire, and he pushes aside* THEUDIA *to put his stool there.*)

Roderick.—Good sir, withdraw a little.

Theudia (*Aside*).—He uses great courtesy.

Hermit (*Aside to* THEUDIA).—He wants that place. It is his mania.

Theudia.—Very well, it is his house. (*Aside.*) But now that I see him well, it is not the first time that I have seen that face severe—Good God! What an idea! I am delirious! (*There is a moment of silence.*)

Hermit.—You are silent.

Theudia.—What do you wish? Of what shall I talk to you?

Hermit.—Don't you know some story you could tell us?

Theudia.—I know so many that my narrative would last a year. But today I have no will to say them. This is for me a melancholy day.

Roderick (*Eagerly and with a gloomy tone*).—For me, too.

Theudia.—And for all Spaniards it will be, while the sun shall give them light.

Roderick (*Excitedly*).—Tell me, then, is today a melancholy day for Spain?

Theudia.—Yes, God know! Hasn't the news of that calamity come to you?

Hermit.—In this lonely desert—

Roderick.—Let him alone—Let him tell me of it though it wound my ears. Have you been in Spain, friend?

Theudia.—I was born beneath its sky.

Roderick.—It has fallen to your lot to be born in an unlucky land. What goes on there today?

Theudia.—Goes on? It is conquered by a savage people to whom it pays vasalage, and who destroy and lay it waste. To secure his own revenge for a love-slight, a traitorous count brought the Moors across the Strait.

Roderick.—Right vilely did he act. May God lay up against him such infamous affront to his king and treason to his people!

Theuda.—They say that outrageously King Roderick insulted his daughter.

Roderick.—But if the king were his enemy, the kingdom was not.

Theudia.—With Moors he made his bargain and years ago on this very day Spain was drowned once for all in the turbulent Guadalete, in Jerez.

Roderick.—Yes, there we lost everything. Beneath its current lies shamefully the glory of the Gothic kingdom. Cursed be he who went to barter with the Moors, and curse the woman, cause of the disaster!

Theudia.—You know that story! (*Both show increasing interest.*)

Roderick.—Yes, and my heart remembers it.

Theudia.—Mine, too.

Roderick.—And rightfully.

Theudia.—Yes, for I was a victim.

Roderick.—I, too.

Theudia.—Do you belong to Spain?

Roderick (*Suddenly becoming reserved*).—I do not know.

Theudia (*Laboriously*).—You.

Roderick.—Enough, now.

Theudia.—No, for my mind seizes on a strange idea. I was at the Guadalete.

Roderick.—With me.

Theudia.—With you. My God! I saw one fall into the river, and I hurled myself in to help him. But I did not see him again.

Roderick.—Theudia!

Theudia (*Starting to kneel*).—My Lord!

Roderick.—Rise—foolish man—By the world I am despised.

Theudia.—But by Theudia, never.

Roderick.—Padre, for a little moment leave us alone.

Hermit (*To* THEUDIA).—I pray you, do not excite him much.

Theudia.—Have no fear of that. The excess of his delight is not strange. We are old friends and far from our native land we see each other after many years. (*Exit the hermit by the door at the left into the other room of the cabin.*)

Roderick.—Talk of my Spain, Friend Theudia, talk of her, you who were the only one in whom that shameful treason found no support, in whom your poor king found no grief. Tell me, do the Spanish people still retain memory of their ancient glory? What do they think of the conquered monarch, Theudia! What place does he hold in their memory?

Theudia.—Ask me not that, my Liege.

Roderick.—Ah, I understand. They blame me and me alone.

Theudia.—You are the conquered one.

Roderick.—Failure to a king is harsh and of great import. So then they think of me with——

Theudia.—Shame, when they think at all. Yet enough of that, for I know your solicitude. But how is it I find you here?

Roderick.—Sad is my history, Theudia.

Theudia.—And mine.

Roderick.—Why do you come here?

Theudia.—Fleeing from the Moors.

Roderick.—Are they victorious?

Theudia.—Our nation is their vassal.

Roderick.—Poor Spain!

Theudia.—Yes, indeed. Those infidels have overrun it from south to north.

Roderick.—Does no part escape?

Theudia.—A little corner in Asturias where group those who escaped the unlucky strife.

Roderick.—But will they be able———

Theudia.—They can do nothing, in spite of the fact that your valiant cousin Pelayo with courage and a cry for venegance unfurls his banner with a hardy heart.

Roderick.—And my nobles with him?

Theudia.—No, there are none.

Roderick.—None, you say?

Theudia.—All perished, one by one at the hands of the Moors.

Roderick.—Then who remain of the illustrious Goths?

Theudia.—You and I are all, for I do not count him who with vile treason has betrayed us all.

Roderick.—Then Count Julian still lives?

Theudia.—As a warning to those who serve their enemies.

Roderick.—Alive! What do you know of him, now?

Theudia.—In a tower he dwelt a long time, but craftily escaped. His lucky star aided him.

Roderick.—Yes, yes—My star so fatal to Spain. Alas, well did my heart tell me. His star proceeds along with mine.

Theudia.—That is my secret. (It is not for you object of my friendsnip) It is a fatal omen which has set the moment for the awful end of my existance.

Theudia.—Do you believe in omens? Why, that is foolish!

Roderick.—Theudia, the destinies of heaven are immutable. Its punishment is just for those like me who have wrought so much evil.

Theudia.—I say you dream, my King. That nobly bravery which confronts its fate, turns back its evil fortune or quickly finds calm tranquillity in the repose of glorious death. That is superstition.

Roderick.—Well, I knew that the unthinking world would call it fear or superstition, but alas, it is true.

Theudia.——And against that villain——

Roderick.—Heaven, enemy of the Goths, that it may accomplish its end guards his hand, but brings down evil on me.

Theudia.—Oh, if only I can meet him! I lost him at the frontier.

Roderick.—Were you following him?

Theudia.—From the day when fronting ours I saw his banner, I swore by my native land to take vengeance for it. And disguised, now as one of his soldiers, now as an adventurer now as a whining beggar, I was his shadow everywhere, everywhere I lay in ambush for him, his treason in my mind. But a hidden power defends him. Never have I been able to find a fitting occasion.

Roderick.—In vain, indeed, do you seek heaven's help for his avenging.

Theudia.—Oh, if I could only come upon his scent again! Would that some day my fury may overtake him! His star will not avail him against me. My vengeance, like him, will be treasonable.

Roderick.—No Theudia, that is impossible. Useless is courage! Listen and keep in your memory the sad page of my story. As I got out of the water of that river where you saw me fall without the victory, and in whose waters perished all that was mine, I abandoned my horse and arms. With a shepherd I traded clothes, and burdened by defeat I entered the thickets, deprived of breath as I have been of hope. How I suffered, Theudia! Sad, vanquished, I traversed the plains of my kingdom, in hunger and loneliness, as a bandit, fleeing the law, travels in darkness. It was the hour when the sun was sinking behind the mountains, and the dense fog was spreading its huge curtain over the whole extent of shady woods. With weariness and fear and grief, a treacherous fever held me in its burning grasp, so that I did not see where I was going in that region where, perhaps man never lived. The more I pressed on to see if somewhere I could come out on the plain, the more the woods about my footsteps arched, the more that dark obscurity o'erwhelmed me. An infernal dizziness clutched at my soul—and deprived of light, of path, the whole of my fell destiny came to my sensitive mind. A king without vassals, a man without friends, the kingdom of the Goths extinct, after me, hopeless, unhonored, nameless, lost forever, Theudia. How odious was I! Terrified, I began loudly to call for help in the desert, but my words lost on the swift gusts of wind, went to expire in the bosom of space . . . . Then, impelled by internal fury, cursing my race and my house, with sacrilegious voice, I called on the Devil.

Theudia.—Heavens!

Roderick.—And he came to me. Sulphurous light! Impetuously the dazzling lightning flashed, and in my breast was evil doubt. I heard something near me. I looked an instant, and in the sulphurous light a sombre monk paused at my side, and at his presence my heart trembled, my valor vanished. I begged him for aid, but he wrathfully burst out with my fateful sentence: "Go, impious man, for he whom your passionate lust dishonored will come, full of crime and shame, with thine own dagger to wound thy breast!" So he spoke and the spectre fled amid the blanketing fog and left me terror-stricken.

Theudia.—Your dream was a wild fancy of your fever-filled brain.

Roderick.—No, Theudia. It was the voice of my fated destiny. While that man is on the earth, Theudia, for me there is neither peace nor rest. Everywhere this pitiless spectre, perilous to my race, dogs my path. Do you see the dagger that hangs at my belt? With it he is to kill me. That is my destiny. Theudia, there is no region safe for me. This man is to come upon my path.

Theudia.—And you believe this! Keep it concealed from people, and tolerate this frankness from me. Your austere and penitent life diminishes the grandeur of your life, the understanding of your mind.

Roderick.—It exerts upon my heart a holy fascination, I confess, Theudia, and that prophecy and that portent frighten me.

Theudia.—Portent, you call it! Does not such vile superstition dishonor you?

Roderick.—As you will, but I believe in it. Were it a fascinating figment of the mind, it would disappear in time. Fasting and haircloth would have uprooted it from my brain.

Theudia.—Still better would the warlike trumpet and the army's return from the conflict drag it from your recollection. That better suits your noble race: instead of the cabin and that priestly robe, the white tent and the iron bound mace, and the Cordoban steed, son of the Thunderbolt. Yes, while Theudia lives and while you are willing to hold him friend, with brave boasting he, enemy of peace, will ever tell you that the noble who shuns conflict is a coward.

Roderick.—Traitor.

Theudia.—Oho! Your soul awakens to the voice of honor. 'Twas what I sought. I see your noble blood is not yet dead: your heart still beats with chivalry. Hear me, my Liege, and take in slowly the weight and right of what I say: that it is a shame that he who was born in a palace should wait with fear for his enemy. You are lost, without hope. There remains for you neither might nor right, subjects nor fortune: the Moor has destroyed your army, the crescent has overthrown the cross: But there is a heart within your breast that demands reckoning of your ancient honor. A king's heart must be noble. If it is your fate to die at the hands of that traitorous count who betrayed us, escape half the journey, seeking after him with fiery bravery. Courageously provoke your destiny. Engage with it your last fight and overcome this fate which frightens you, your dagger quivering in its throat. You have neither army or battle flags; but there still remains to you a friend and vassal, and the orb of heaven is not master of the world, nor the decree of fate irrevocable. Leave, then, the mystery of this craggy ground, provide yourself with lance and sword, and with your sword and lance and me as squire, if you cannot be king, be noble knight.

Roderick.—Leave off, Theudia. That warlike language serves for well-born hearts, and in mine own the sound of your fierce words awakes my courage. My bloody outrage cries for blood, my squadrons conquered in Jerez for blood cry out. You are right, Theudia. At all events, it behooves me to die like a Gothic monarch. Yes, to my ears and nostrils I feell the zephyrs come which shake the passions, bringing scents of camp, the clamor of the battle at its height, the limpid accents of the shrill clarion that rouses the noble steeds; and that warlike and barbarous harmony brings out all the love of glory of my race.

Unworthy of a monarch and a warrior is this debility of which I am ashamed. I mean to laugh at my superstition. I do not intend, Theudia, that fear shall conquer me.

Theudia.—Two paths lie before you and over either I shall follow you. To seek out the count and die avenged, or enlist under friendly banner and come to an honorable end like a soldier.

Roderick.—That better suits the heart I have, Theudia. Let us forget the past and in disgrace and far from rancor, let us approach our death among the noble fighters. This cursed weapon which threatens my existence, let it remain here after my departure. (*He takes the dagger from the scafford and thrusts it into the post that sustains the roof*) And let remain fixed in this post, with my dagger, the mystery of my life. Do you say that in the mountain a noble, a thunderbolt of vengeance, has taken up arms? Very well. What are we doing in a strange land? Out of my sight, garment of penitence! Come Theudia, let us go to fight for our Spain! and to triumph or die with Pelayo. Let future generations never say that I did not know how to be either kind or knight.

Theudia.—Now, thank God. I find my king again!

Roderick.—Tomorrow we shall start for Asturias.

Theudia.—Portugal who gave us shelter will grant us free passage.

Roderick.—Until tomorrow, then, sleep peacefully. Good night, Theudia.

Theudia.—My lord, perhaps you are going to remain on guard while I sleep.

Roderick.—From now on there is neither master nor man.

Theudia.—My lord—

Roderick.—Leave me alone till dawn, for I am only a poor adventurer. Instead of your king, I shall be your companion. (*Exit* THEUDIA *to the next room at the left.*)

Roderick.—That loyal fellow tells the truth. It is better, in the end, to die in battle for another's cause than, slave to servile superstition, like a fool bemoan lost Spain. I shall once more go into the world, with my ill-fated fortune for heritage, concealing in its inner depths the fatal secret of my existence. I am nothing, I have nothing, I hope for nothing. Encased from today on in my armor I shall go adventuring in my own cause without expecting glory nor fortune. But when I fall in battle let my gory remains say to the world: "See, if he did not know how to defend Spain, he knew at least how to die for her!" But alas. My own people who hold me in horror with cold ill will are to see me descend the abyss as they saw me descend from the throne. Yes, applauding, it may be, my adverse fate—And all is your work, infamous Count. Because of you I am the scorn of the universe. It is necessary that our blood be spilled. (*Seeing the dagger.*) But, Holy God, You there, Dagger! Flee, get thee apart, fascinating dream which I vainly seek to avoid. Never satiatated with Gothic blood, this fateful dagger seeks a guiding hand. That of one of two men—oh vengeful tiger, to be the exterminator of my family. Let one of us two alone remain alive. Let us see the infernal region that gives aid. My reason, my belief casts it aside, but never can I rid myself of this idea. Spur on, O Hell, that fatal day! Bring it upon us soon. A fearful dizziness harasses my breast, blood thirstiness irritates my heart. Oh, flee forever, odious phantom, or come before my eyes, damned shadow! (*He opens the door fiercely and as a lightning flash illuminates the room,* COUNT JULIAN *enters.*)

Count.—Thank the devil that I reached the summit.

Roderick.—Who are you? Where are you going? Whom do you seek? Who brings you?

Count Julian.—What speedy questioning, but if that is the custom, listen: A man: to Portugal. A fire to dry me of the heavy rain. Have you more to ask?

Roderick.—You show bad humor.

Count Julian.—As I was asked, so I reply. Have you anything to eat?

Roderick.—Nothing.

Count Julian.—Very well, then, the questioning as far as I am concerned stops here. (*Calmly he seats himself before the fire.*)

Roderick.—Unmannerly you come where people shelter you.

Count Julian.—Since without your inviting me I come, and those clouds drove me here, neither you offer me hospitality nor am I grateful for it.

Roderick.—Courtesy, indeed, compels me, but I am not one ready to countenance speech of such haughtiness.

Count Julian.—I either, for I come despairing and weary of life.

Roderick.—Like me.

Count Julian.—Early tomorrow with mad desire coursing after death, I take my leave.

Roderick.—And so do I?

Count Julian.—Whither?

Roderick.—To Spain.

Count Julian.—I come from there.

Roderick.—Are you from there?

Count Julian.—Unhappily.

Roderick.—Unlucky star pursues me, too.

Count Julian.—It can never be worse than mine.

Roderick.—Indeed it can.

Count Julian.—I doubt it.

Roderick.—There have I lost all I held dear.

Count Julian.—I, too.

Roderick.—Parents, brothers—

Count Julian.—So have I.

Roderick.—My friends betrayed me.

Count Julian.—So did mine.

Roderick.—I was the mockery of churls.

Count Julian.—Like me.

Roderick.—A vile man has stained the honor of my coat of arms.

Count Julian.—Others have done the same to mine.

Roderick.—I have had to flee.

Count Julian.—Like thieves we disbanded, without power or glory, my soldiers and I. All have been ingrates to me.

Roderick.—All have been traitors to me.

Count Julian.—I hope for nothing.

Roderick.—Nor I. I only think at times of fearful vengeance.

Count Julian.—Not worse than mine will be.

Roderick.—Oh yes, they are such that they cause me terrible vertigo.

Count Julian.—Mine are like madness.

Roderick.—Mine take me back to Spain just to die.

Count Julian.—So do mine. I come seeking a man I hate and for one of us yawns the grave.

Roderick.—I seek a man unlucky for me, and I keep this dagger of my family, since for one of us it marks the end of life. *The* COUNT *looks at it and recognizes it. This is up to the actors to put across.*)

Count Julian.—Is that dagger yours?

Roderick.—Yes.

Count Julian.—God help me! That steel is the death of the Goths.

Roderick.—I am a Goth.

Count.—I too, but your enemy!

Roderick.—Who boasts of it before my eyes?

Count Julian.—You are the shameless King—

Roderick.—You the vile coward—

Count Julian.—I am Count Julian.

Roderick.—I am Roderick. (*They pause contemplating each other.*)

Count Julian.—We find each other at last.

Roderick.—Yes, we find each other; both scorned and hated by the world. For the last time we look upon each other.

Count Julian.—This gives a tang to my deep hatred. Look at me well. Upon my face, Roderick, your shameless dealings cast affront. The world will be witness of it, and you shall be the scorn and horror of the ages.

Roderick.—My guilt was fault of love. Florinda's loveliness is my excuse. But what will excuse your villainy?

Count Julian.—The ill-luck of my very treason. Dishonored by you, I lost everything. But insult to you alone could not suffice my vengeance. Dishonor to the whole Gothic power was necessary.

Roderick.—That was a deed worthy a traitor like you. You could have satisfied your vile intent going about to kill me cleverly and in secret, or calling out against me your hosts to drink my blood in the campaign, throwing my heart to your legions; and not with such foolish rancour betray our Spain to trample on my throne.

Count Julian.—My feverish rage required it. My fierce intentions were not fulfilled to drink your blood with craft in silence, or against you start a campaign. I wished to give your place to foreign blood and erase your posterity from the nations. That did my bloody rage require; betray your kingdom and overthrow your throne.

Roderick.—And you succeeded.

Count Julian.—Yes, I succeeded in making the world abhor us both, you for your slavery to shameful lust, and me for my treason jeered.

Roderick.—Such evil I can scarcely understand.

Count Julian.—But I did more—

Roderick.—It is impossible to make your vileness worse—

Count Julian.—Listen, King Roderick, to the heights my anger against you attained. I alone of my race remain. The others were prisoners of the Moors. Before my eyes the Countess was stoned to death, my children, stabbed were thrown into the sea from Tarifa during the attack. But I bring you news that leaves me paid for all my woes. I learned, some time ago, that you still lived in Portugal.

Roderick.—God!

Count Julian.—From a monk who found you in the forest.

Roderick (*Trembling*).—A monk?

Count Julian.—Yes, my brother whose vows forbid him now to turn against you, but whose guile left forever broken the links of my chain, to follow your footsteps day and night in order that the blood of your veins wash out the stain of my affront.

Roderick.—Is that true? And that monk was your brother? He was just a man? no ghost? There was nothing about him superhuman?

Count Julian.—You frighten me when you question thus. He rescued me and he said, "Go and seek him, but before you kill him, tell him that his Chaste Egilona by her love has bought another crown."

Roderick.—My wife!

Count Julian.—Yes. Abdalasis stole her from you, or to tell the truth, she sold herself to him. O noble race in which she was born, and nobly did she follow the trail of her husband (*jeering*) a Christian queen, favorite of an Arab! She was born under a lucky star! So do not mourn for so loyal a matron who now lacks neither husband nor crown.

Roderick.—Enough, enough, traitor. The Gothic race, dishonored by you, betrayed by you, clamors thirstily for all your blood. (RODERICK *starts to seize the dagger sticking in the post but* COUNT JULIAN *anticipates him and grasps it.* RODERICK *steps back two paces with superstitious terror.*)

Count Julian.—May it be shed equally with yours. The same slime smears our crests. The same tomb will hold us both. (*The* COUNT *attacks* RODERICK *but* THEADIA *suddenly steps between them grasping a battle axe.*)

Theudia.—You lie. There still remains one who regards his honor and separates the traitor from an unlucky man. (*He gives the* COUNT *a mortal blow—The* COUNT *falls.*)

Roderick.—Theudia!

Theudia.—My lord, it was my duty, for in avenging you, I avenged Spain.

Roderick.—Thanks Theudia! Today your heroism brought me out of my evil superstitution, a thing strange in a noble. Yes, let my fear go to the grave with him. Let us go with Pelayo to the mountains and succeed, O, Theudia, at least in dying like heroes in our native land. *To the* HERMIT) Padre, give the corpse burial where it may be in peace. My just rancour does not pass beyond the grave, though the honor of Spain be in my keeping. I shall return to the camp, to the hard struggle, and although I die without army and without throne, for one who dies honorably, the tomb of a king must be a soldier's grave.

(*Curtain as* THEUDIA *and the king start out.*)

IN THE HEART OF A TREE

BY SYDNEY BARLOW BROWN

O might I live in the heart of a tree
  Where the quivering leaves would whisper to me,
With never a tear, and never a pain,—
  But the sigh of the wind and the swish of the rain;
And never a discord, never a wrong,—
  Only the note of a wild bird's song.

And perhaps, sweetheart, you would come to me,
  You would find me there in the heart of a tree;
We would love again, and be young and free
  In the heart of a tree,
    In the heart of a tree!

RUSKIN'S TONE-POEMS ANENT LEAVES

BY ESTHER MATSON

Tone-poems we call certain modern musical compositions and I am wondering,—how if we were to call some of the most idiosyncratic of Ruskin's writings tone-poetry? That "numerous prose" of his which is so difficult to classify, which we dislike to call by that mongrel term prose-poetry,—but which we have to grant is poetic because by means of beautiful words and by a subtle though unstereotyped weaving of rhythms he evokes in us a heightened mood. Just such a mood as does the musical tone-poem with its weaving of beautiful sounds and its intimations of things seen and remembered.

His theme Ruskin would find sometimes in a work of art, oftener than not in some aspect of nature. His eloquent reactions to the changing sky scenery, to mountain crags and cataracts and moving rivers are famed enough. Less famous, but no whit less genuine was his love of trees and leaves. Indeed his love for these was almost proprietary. More than this, although he had no relish for orthodox botany, his passion for them was not merely sentimental but founded on real study and observation. He declared men needed to know less about the anatomy of plants and more about their "biographies", truly a modernist attitude this, is it not?

A connoisseur of tree contours, he noted the "dome shape of the oak," the irregularity of the Swiss firs that "stretch their branches, angular and wild and white like forks of lightning, into the air of the ravine," the "writhing of the olive's" "intricate branches," the straightness and roundness of the pine. He contended that the pine is not as most people think a "ragged tree" but when healthy, round and of extreme shapliness.

So with his observations of the different kinds of foliage; they are precise as well as poetic. As when he is talking of the pines again . . "other trees rise against the sky in dots and knots, but this in fringes." Or as when he is drawing the contrast between the sort of leaves that are spread "like the burdock" and have "ribs like a Gothic roof" and those others which are folded and "become beautiful in wrinkles," whose grace seems to come from "undulation as of a liquid current along the leaf edge."

In trees and leaves he finds a "lovely language, written or spoken for us, not in frightful black letters, nor in dull sentences, but in fair green and shadowy shapes of waving words . . ." His mind is so impressed by the cadence of this language and his own words in speaking of it are so rhythmical that spaced in modern fashion many passages from his prose might pass as present-day poetry.

One is tempted to try such a spacing with a fragment from one of his chapters in "Modern Painters." He is describing mountain trees.

> "rooting themselves in inhospitable rocks,
> stooping to look into ravines,
> hiding from the search of glacier winds,
> reaching forth to the rays of rare sunshine,
> crowding down together to drink at sweetest streams,
> climbing hand in hand among the difficult slopes,
> opening in sudden dances round the mossy knolls,
> gathering into companies at rest among the fragrant fields,
> gliding in grave procession over the heavenward ridges,—"

So much for an interesting experiment, but of course one prefers Ruskin's own arrangement of the words and one realizes that the prose form not only gives him an especial freedom but that it affects us with a peculiar subtilty. This underflow of rhythm influences the subconscious rather then the conscious part of us and perhaps just because it is so little obvious it is the more potent.

Listen to the description of those arch favorites,—the "young pines." Hear how they are " . . . scented with frankincense, their slender stems straight as arrows, and crystal white, looking as if they would break with a touch, like needles; and their arabesques of dark leaf pierced through and through by the pale radiance of clear sky, opal blue, where they follow each other along the soft hill ridges, up and down."

In such a passage we may note in addition to the cadence appealing to our ears, a further poetic aspect of Ruskin's prose, an appeal to the "inner eye" of the imagination.

He never can praise the pines and their foliage enough. Hear him anent certain "dark masses of innumerable pines" set between a background of Swiss mountains and a foreground of tiny hamlets gay with orchards and gardens. Here the trees are

> "asserting themselves for ever as fixed shadows, not to be pierced or

banished even in the intensest sunlight; fallen flakes and fragments of the night, stayed in their solemn squares in the midst of all the rosy bendings of the orchard boughs and happy effulgence of the harvest, and tracing themselves in black network and motionless fringes against the blanched blue of the horizon in its saintly clearness. And yet they do not sadden the landscape, but seem to have been set there chiefly to show how bright everything else is round them; and all the clouds look of purer silver, and all the air seems filled with a whiter and more living sunshine, where they are pierced by the sable points of the pines; and all the pastures look of more glowing green, where they run up between the purple trunks; and the sweet field footpaths skirt the edges of the forest for the sake of its shade, sloping up and down about the slippery roots, and losing themselves every now and then hopelessly among the violets, and ground ivy, and brown sheddings of the fibrous leaves; . . . . ”

Even though so dark this foliage seems to him to be “in one sense more cheerful than other foliage; for it casts only a pyramidal shadow. Lowland forest arches overhead, and checkers the ground with darkness; but the pine, growing in scattered groups, leaves the glades between emerald-bright. Its gloom is all its own; narrowing into the sky, it lets the sunshine strike down to the dew.”

Just fact, but did any of us ever think of it until it was pointed out to us?

So perhaps we have seen the stone-pines of Italy glitter when the noon-tide sun came suddenly out on them after a rain-storm. But who of us could have transferred our impression of the sight into a tone-poem like that in the rhapsody on Rain-clouds?

“The rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch, and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas . . . ”

But the passage needs to be read in its entirety if one would enjoy to the full its assembling of lovely words, its cadences and its powerful crescendo.

Next to the pine Ruskin loves the olive with its “pointed fretwork of light and narrow leaves, inlaid on the blue field of the sky.” The grayed color of the olive foliage which affected Nathaniel Hawthorne so drearily is in Ruskin’s eyes a surpassing virtue. The wild tree growing “carelessly” is the one best loved and in it he finds instead of drabness a “hoary dimness” which he likens to a soft “mantle, silver gray, and tender like the down on a bird’s breast, with which far away, it veils the undulations of the mountains.”

Acknowledged: this is not a spectacular tree. All unobtrusively it grows

> "tufting the rocks with no vivid bloom; only with soft snow of blossom, and scarcely fulfilled fruit, mixed with grey leaf and thornset stem . . . "

and its mixed fate is figurative to him of the old Greek ideal of human happiness.

As the musical tone-poem gives us intimations or reminiscences of minute and everyday occurrences, of running brooks, of the sight of birds on the wing, of the smell of flowers, so Ruskin, fond as he is of the leafage of great and noble trees does not scorn the "humbler" leafage of grasses and ferns, even of the lichens and "deep-fibred moss."

He revels in the sight of the blue sky-strip as seen through the leaves of the vine. Indeed some of the everyday aspects of nature can affect him with almost Keatsian raptures. With this difference. That Keats' flights were sustained while Ruskin's were ever and again being brought down to earth by the weight of a certain didactic self-consciousness.

But see with what a half wistful, half whimsical humor he writes of the "cereal grasses." ". . . Mysterious evermore, not only with dew in the morning or mirage at noon, but with the shaking threads of fine arborescence, each a little belfry of grain bells, all a-chime."

Note his appreciation of the ferns that grow like fringes under the curves of Alpine crags. See how he appraises the "crisped lawns" of England, "dim with early dew" and "dinted by happy feet." Could there be a better characterization of the domesticated quality of that turf which, as Sir Walter Scott pointed out long ago, always follows in the wake of the English-speaking race.

The passage in Ruskin's "Modern Painters" beginning "Gather a single blade of grass and examine for a minute quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green . . . " gives us one of the loveliest of all his tone-poems and illustrates, besides, in the most striking way, his love of form and scent and color, his fondness for words and word orchestration, his habit of using the sensuous aspects of things as symbols of spiritual truths,—shows us too, how essentially and innately religious his nature was.

If we turn to his studies of leafage in art and architecture we get a further sidelight on his temperament and even an illumination of certain of his social theories.

Writing of the coming of spring in the country he personifies the leaves so that they seem as alive as birds. He declares "You do not know what leaf form means, unless you have seen the buds burst, and the young leaves breathing low in the sunshine and wondering at the first shower of rain." And to represent any of this aliveness in art!—

> "Paint a leaf indeed!" he says—"Titian, Correggio, Giorgione, Leonardo, very nearly, trying hard. Holbein, three or four times, in precious pieces, highest wrought. Raphael it may be, in one or two crowns of Muse or Sibyl. If any one else, in later times, we have to consider."

Yes, in this particular, even Ruskin's idol, Turner, could not come up to his ideal. "Into the spirit of the pine he could not enter . . . " Among our author's own drawings are many delineations of various kinds of branches and foliage taken from nature as well as from the ornamentation of Gothic buildings and in his fragment of an autobiography there is a touching paragraph in which he confesses that if he can find any satisfaction at all in reviewing his life it is in remembering that, at least in his writings, he has "done justice to the pine."

His intensity of admiration for pointed leaves is of a piece with his intense love for pointed architecture, with his predilection for the cusped windows of Venetian palaces, and for the foliated traceries of early cathedrals. With the formalistic followers of the Greeks and their insistence on symmetry he is wholly antipathetic. His sympathy is all for the Gothic workers of the times before the love of florid forms brought about excess and degeneration. This admiration of his for Gothic building (as for its allied art, sculpture,) is based by him on more than one reason, but it would hold, he contends, if only for the one fact that there is room in it for variety,—for that "caprice" which so long as it does not interfere with others' rights, he finds essential to true beauty. (And here to be sure, are we not minded of the claims of our own day's Expressionism?)

Here again the source of beauty is the leaf in nature. In the "Seven Lamps" he makes this plain.

> "The pointed arch is beautiful; it is the termination of every leaf that shakes in the summer wind, and its most fortunate associations are directly borrowed from the trefoiled grass of the field, or from the star of its flowers."

But Ruskin rejects the sentimental opinion held rigidly in his day that the Gothic architecture came about as a direct imitation of trees arching in a forest, and the Gothic ornamentation as a direct attempt to represent leaves and flowers. Contrarywise according to his belief. "The Gothic did not arise out of, but develop itself into, a resemblance to vegetation." And again " . . . exactly in proportion to the antiquity of the work, the imitation of such organic forms is less, and in the earliest examples does not exist at all."

It is hard for us to realize what rank heresy this is in Ruskin's day, what bad and bold pronouncements his art dicta appear to be. But he is most decided in his opinion that this Gothic art and architecture is an evolution, not an imitation. Evolution! Yes, ironical to be sure when we remember how he rages at the Darwinian theories, but the fact is he claims an evolutionary growth even for his traceries. "The intricate patterning of the traceried windows arose from the gradual enlargement of the penetrations of the shield of stone, which, usually supported by a central pillar, occupied the head of early windows."

He insists that even the northern Gothic can be explained only by recognition of the influence of the Arabs and that it was only "gradually" both in the north and the south, and as men grew more contemplative and were less constantly preoccupied with warfare that the cathedral builders found direct inspiration in natural objects. Then the spiring fir trees suggested ever more slender pillars and ever higher pinnacles, the various leaves gave hints for ever more elaborately carved capital and cornice, and the roses lent their radiance to the glory of West Windows.

Even the contrast which Ruskin paints so brilliantly between the sculptured foliage of the north and of the south is based by him on a natural difference of conditions. The northern was wrought by men of active, alert physique, living in a climate where activity is necessary to self-preservation while the southern was wrought by men in whom a degree of languor was harmless. To the one type of man perpendicular lines and acute angles would be agreeable, while to the other horizontal lines and a lack of angularity would be not only more agreeable but helpfully restful. See how figuratively Ruskin puts his thought

> " . . . the leaves which under the Italian's hand, roll, and and flow, and bow down over their black shadows, as in the weariness of noonday heat, are, in the north, crisped and frost-bitten, wrinkled on the edges, and sparkling as if with dew."

But here we are nearing the crux of Ruskin's belief—of what we might call his Art-plus belief—which is nothing more nor less than the idea that the old masterpieces are masterpieces because they are expressions of the workers' delight in life,—the idea that the laborer is worthy not merely of hire for work done, but of joy in the doing of it, and that indeed, no product is worthy the name of art that is not wrought by men with joy.

He points out how the marvelous old cathedrals were created rather than merely built—each individual stone-carver or woodcutter being left free to carry out his particular details as seemed fit to himself. Therefore each worked with a gusto. Therefore what each one made, whether lyric, or humorous, or sheerly grotesque, partook of his own character,—remains for us in consequence something far more captivating, more ingratiating than if it had been merely beautiful.

Even the naiveties and uglinesses of the old gargoyles and quaint monsters, even the stiffnesses and unrealities of certain of the old figures enhance the power they have over us. To Ruskin "they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in the scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities, can secure; but which it must be the first aim of all Europe at this day to regain for her children."

We all know how tensely Ruskin held his social-art or art-social philosophy and how generously he tried to put it into action. Nonetheless it is strange to find in his writings about so apparently slight a matter as foliage, hints,—no,—more than hints,—almost a summing up of that philosophy. For to leaves he imputes "an exquisite sensibility" and more than this, a capacity for what we of today call concert action. Here is his claim for them.

> "They do not grow each to his own liking, till they run against one another, and then turn back sulkily; but by a watchful instinct, far apart, they anticiate their companions' courses, as ships at sea, and in every new unfolding of their edged tissue, guide themselves by the sense of each other's remote presence, and by a watchful penetration of leafy purpose in the far future . . . "

And here again

> " . . . the beauty of these buildings of the leaves consists, from the first step of it to the last, in its showing their perfect fellowship; and a single aim uniting them under circumstances of various distress, trial, and pleasure. Without the fellowship, no beauty; with-

out the steady purpose, no beauty; without trouble and death, no beauty; without individual pleasure, freedom, and caprice, so far as may be consistent with the universal good, no beauty."

But even he recognizes that men are not as leaves. Human passions criss-cross the path of human fate and even hinder man's getting the help he might from a richer communion with nature. Our attention is called to a certain painting by Paolo Uccello. It is a battlepiece, prodigious, fearsome. But beyond the tangle of spears, of lances and of helmets, beyond the welter of bloodshed the spectator may catch glimpses of trees, of hedges and even of blossoming plants. To the combatants, heedful only of slaughter, none of these exist. They might as well not have been.

Looking on this painting Ruskin's fervent imagination leaps to all the "gentle trees" of the world and these trees seem to him to be sorrowing for mankind's preoccupation with worldeiness and war and woe. They seem to him actually to grieve and to have grieved throughout the years as, season after season "they opened their innocent leaves . . . in vain for men."

> "All along the dell of England her beeches cast their dappled shade only where the outlaw drew his bow, and the king rode his careless chase; and by the sweet French rivers their long ranks of poplar waved in the twilight, only to show the flames of burning cities, on the horizon, through the tracery of their stems; amidst the fair defiles of the Apennines the twisted olive trunks hid the ambushes of treachery; and on their valley meadows day by day, the lilies which were white at the dawn were washed crimson at sunset . . ."

Unhappy humanity! But Ruskin,—chimerical dreamer or far-seeing prophet remains to be seen,—believed in its ability to improve. Even believed in its teachableness. So all his life he went on crying aloud from the house-tops. He has told us himself how when he was a small child one of his favorite amusements was the standing up and imitating for his mother and her friends the preacher whom he heard perforce every Sunday. Easy to visualize the little Victorian parlor, the gloved and bonneted gentlewomen calling there, and the queer little boy pounding on "the red sofa cushions."

Not hard to believe either, that as he tells us, his sermonette of eleven words or thereabout always began with the same sentence, short but succinct, "People, be good." It was the keynote of his preachments as a grown man.

Preachments, ay, there the rub. The stumbling-block to many who might else be his staunch admirers. True, his preachiness was a failing. But a human one. In his generation, moreover, far from unusual. And then the fact is we of today do not have to sit out his harangues. We can cut his sermonizing. We can blue-pencil his didactic passages to our hearts content; and yet have left so much of wonder worth as to make us breathless.

Yes, his art-dicta, after all, are not yet out-moded. Not those, nor his love of nature, nor his humaneness. Yes, just possibly even his ideas about standards of living, about work and play, and about the faculty of reverence may still give us pause. Just possibly his influence on the so-called Return to Nature was greater than we realize or ever have given him credit for.

As for his tone-poems, these, even if we count only those having mere foliage for theme,—are treasure-trove. Turning back to his pages we may discover leaves transmuted into "leaf ministries," potent not merely to fill the individual soul with sheer delight, but also with hope that one of these days in truth they "*shall* be for the healing of the nations."

HORSES OF PARADISE

By Helene Magaret

The Buddhist priests have told the story
With truth in their cavernous eyes,
And the children chant in ballad and legend
Of the Horses of Paradise.

The Buddhist priests have learned the story
From their fathers who told it before,
And their sullen gods who heard the horses
Neigh at the Temple door.

I

Kioto, the City of Temples, tells
Of a lacquered porch and of five bronze bells,
Where the scent of the incense-urn excels
The fragrance of all Japan;
Where the altars are drowsy with lanterns and flowers,
And gold-bellied Jizo in irony glowers
Far over the painted pagoda towers,
Over the rice field fan.

Here through the midnight of arrogant pines
Peer lavender, star-blown wistaria vines,
That hug the neglected dragons on shrines
Forgotten forevermore.
While in April the pink-petaled cherry-bloom comes
With the whimsical white of snow-dusted plums,
And November throws tangled chrysanthemums,
Like gold, at the Temple door.

II

Setsu Yohang, master-artist,
Yearned from cherry-bloom till fall,
Praying for a sacred symbol . . .
Proof of Buddha's priestly call . . .
He must paint three holy horses
On the lacquered Temple wall!

Not till springtime crept to summer,
And the idols' eyes grew blear,
Drunken on the dusty garden . . .
Pollen drifting time of year,
Not until the pollen scattered
Did the sacred sign appear.

Then he saw three holy horses
Charging down the clouds of flame,
Where the sunset stream of crimson
Like a burning blood-stream came,
And he heard one black horse neighing . . .
Neighing loudly Buddha's name.

So he went unto the Temple,
Sandal-footed, crystal-eyed;
All the passion of the artist
Pulsing through his princely pride.
With his heart upon the sunset,
Setsu Yohang . . . stepped inside.

Thrice the cherry-bloom had faded;
Thrice the maple flared to fire;
Still he labored, still he painted . . .
All his art in his desire.
Never Buddhist saw him falter . . .
Never Buddhist saw him tire.

Perfect as three living horses
Setsu's horses had become.
One was black as twilit cedars,
One was white as night-blown plum,
One was brown as curled-up petals
Of a dried chrysanthemum.
Setsu Yohang felt the flow

Of his life-blood dripping go
From his fingers, thick and slow,
   Until the steeds were fed,
Till his yellow face was lean,
Pallid as the light between
Dragons on a silken screen
   And terrified he fled

Down the darkest ways where none
Chancing by could see him run
Frightened from the work he'd done,
Frightened home to bed!

III

Kioto, the City of Temples, slept
While the curious moon and her star-train crept
Over the lotus beds that wept
For Setsu's sacrifice.
When suddenly hard on the darkened roofs
Came the galloping, galloping sound of hoofs,
And the neighing of horses . . . terrible proofs
Of havoc in fields of rice.

The black horse ran like the shadow of night,
The white horse leaped in blinding light,
But the brown horse madly neighed affright . . .
Neighed at the slumbering town!
There were flying manes and flaming eyes
Gleaming white with wild surprise,
And the flashing in moonlight of flanks and thighs
Trampling the rice fields down.

A trampling and galloping, neighing and splash
Over the rice fields with thunderous dash
Broken through water, metallic the clash
Of hoofs where the marsh winds sweep.
Then stealthily over the land crept near
A quiet as deep as the stillness of fear . . .
And only one person awakened to hear
The lotus blossoms weep!

IV

When gray-haired dawn grew darkly red
Kioto still was dull with sleep,
But Mito Sanki left his bed
For he had heard the lotus weep.

And Mito Sanki, poet-proud,
At dawn was daily wont to ponder
Along the paths where lilies crowd
And multi-colored insects wander.

He saw the rice fields trampled down,
The hoof-prints on the Temple lawn;
He saw dead flowers in the town
Torn where the horses' hoofs had gone.

But Mito Sanki, fearless-eyed,
Threw wide the iron Temple door,
And scarcely pausing stepped inside
Beneath bent boughs of sycamore.

He felt a shower of water fall,
Like rain-drops on his sleek black hair,
And startled looked upon the wall
To see three horses foaming there.
The sacred steeds of Paradise
Were trembling into paint once more;
Their flanks were wet from fields of rice,
Their manes dripped dew upon the floor.

V

So Mito Sanki hurried in wonder
To waken the artist who slept,
And tell of the dew on the crimson lacquer
In the room where the lanterns were kept,
To tell him the tale of the Holy Horses
And how the lotus wept.

He followed the paths to the artist's cottage.
Before him the butterflies fled,
And Setsu Yohang, the holy artist,
He found in his bamboo bed . . .
Setsu Yohang he found that morning . . .
. . . Yellow and gaunt and dead!

The Buddhist priests still tell the story,
As their fathers told it before,
And say that the artist died when the horses
Neighed at the Temple door.

LE CIMETIERE MARIN

By Paul Valery

Translated from the French by John F. Matheus

The sea's expanse with ships like doves now looms
Across the pines, water-across the tombs;
High noon it is and how high heaven's fire
The sea reflexs, the sea, eternal motion,
And peace, in gaze upon the tranquil ocean,
The peace to which the gods aspire.

Pure workmanship of light foam diamonds flashes,
Light sparkles on the wave, swift changes, dashes
To nothingness the multi-faceted flow,
When shines the sun obeying Nature's laws,
Work absolute of some Eternal Cause
That isolates Time and the dream to know.

Thy treasures, Sea, remain unchanged, at par,
Minerva's marts weigh what their value are.
Silence! The frowning wave is a sleepless eye
Over the deeps where sleeping eons roll.
The structure of life is built within the soul;
With thee is the mystery of them who die.

Time's Temple here; a single sigh is all
These silent tombs can back to life recall.
My gaze still centered on the endless main,
I mount and look afar to catch a gleam
Of what existence means and life's dark dream.
The answer is a sovereign disdain.

As fruit seems with perfection rife to blend
And then in form and substance finds quick end
Beneath the crush of some devouring mouth,
I, too, breathe in that future smoke of me,
Transformed as sounding shores of roaring sea,
A consummation of a soul devout.

O sky, behold, I am of them who change
And after pride and after such a strange
Security, with power still replete,
I throw my thoughts upon this shining space
And o'er the houses of the dead I trace
The feeble movement of my shadow's feet.

O soul, laid bare to torches of the sun,
'Tis you that I sustain, for you I shun
The pitiless glare, the light of burning truth.
Pure essence, I restore you to the source
Of Life. Lend me a modicum of force,
A mourful ray to light the dark forsooth.

Unto and for myself alone I seek
Within a human heart, on Olympus' peak
Between the Void and "ding an sich," *the* thing,
Some echo of my inner greatness bold,
That cavern dark and deep and bitter cold,
The soul's abyss where aspirations wing.

Know you weak captive manacled with straw,
Yet mighty force that prison chains can gnaw,
What dazzling secrets lie before my eyes,
What sort of flesh drags me to rest, I say,
What face draws down unto this charnel clay?
A spark of me will live I dare surmize.

Fenced in, sacred, full of a psychic flame,
A bit of earth reserved for all the same,
This place suits me, with candles in array,
This place of gold and stone and somber shade.
Much marble quivers where the clods are laid.
The faithful sea sleeps by the tombs display.

O watch dog sturdy, remove the idol stone!
Before the shepherd's smile I all alone
Pasture the snowy flock of peaceful tombs,
Queer sheep, mysterious, contrasted green—
Away, remove the prudent doves that preen,
The idle dreams, the angels with their plumes.

Once here, the future has no more behest,
The scratching cricket grates the emptiness.
All burns, is decomposed into thin air,
Quintessence that can never be destroyed,
For Life is boundless, drunk with utter void
And bitterness is sweet and wit is rare.

The hidden dead fare well beneath this earth,
Which warms again the bones and solves their birth.
High noon above—high noon and nothing stirs.
One thinks upon one's self and suits one's self,
The goal achieved—work laid upon the shelf
And change in Nature clear without a blur.

Only in me canst Thou contain Thy fears.
My doubts, remorse and self-restraining tears
Are all the fault of Thy bejeweled gift
But in their dark sepulchral night weighed down
A people roam the rooted underground,
Who to your side have now begun to drift.

Now they have melted with the mighty Void.
The rough red clay has drunk and now is cloyed.
Unto the flowers has passed the gift of life!
Where now resound the voices of the dead?
Their little ways, their whims, their souls, where sped?
Where tears were formed to weep with worms is rife.

The cries so shrill of maidens playful yet,
Their eyes, their teeth, their lids with weeping wet,
Their charming breasts that gamble with the flame,
The blood which reddens surrendered in the lips,
The latest gifts, their fragile finger tips,
All join beneath the soil the endless game.

And you, great soul, dare you expect a dream
Which will not have the lie of things that seem,
Which here to eyes of Flesh the wave and gold
Have made? Will song be yours when you are dead?
Alas! All things must flee as they have sped.
I am a breeze. Impatience, pay its toll.

Poor immortality of gilt and crape,
A wreathéd solace drear, but no escape,
Which makes of Death a mother's breast for cheer,—
Fine falsehood that and pious subterfuge!
Who does not know, who does not them refuse
The empty skull and its eternal leer.

Deep thinking fathers wise and erudite
Under the shovelfuls hidden from sight,
Ye are the earth's confounding now our tread.
The gnawing worm, invincible to stab
No more exists for you—you sleep beneath the slab.
He lives on life, he never quits my head.

The worm of love, perhaps, or hate of self?
His hidden fangs so near, I am his pelf.
All names will suit this gnawing cancer pain.
What boots the name! He sees, he dreams, he peeps
And likes my flesh, unto my couch he creeps.
I am this living creature's living gain.

O stoic Zeno! Zeno! Cruel, narrow,
Hast thou sent me this barbed and wingéd arrow,
That quivers, stings, its gnaw is never done?
'Twas pain that gave me birth and kills me whole.
Ah, Sun! What torture for the aching soul—
Achilles motionless yet moves to run.

No—no! Be up! Into the life that comes!
My body, break these ties which life benumbs.
Drink in, my lungs, the movement of the wind.
A coolness breathed from ocean gives me soul.
O Power foul! Let me run with waves that roll.
I shall rush forth alive with the sea and the wind.

Yes. Sea, almightily endowed with ire,
A panther's skin and chlamys for attire,
Pierced by a myriad images of sun,
The Absolute you are, drunk with the blue
Of liquid flesh, substance reproaching you
In great tumult that is with silence one.

The wind uprises! One must try to live!
Tremendous currents motion to ocean give.
Waves dare to dash in spray upon the cliff.
Haste on, ye waves, haste on quite maddened.
Break, break waves! Break, O waters gladdened,
This Sea serene where feeding ship-sails lift.

LA PLUIE DANS LA NUIT

By Sydney Barlow Brown

For me the rain's a song,
    Sung on the house-top all night long;
Harmonies of joy and pain
    Intermingle in the rain.

Sing rain, sing your song,
    Sing on the house-top all night long,
Laughing, sobbing a refrain,
    Intermingling joy and pain.
Through my dreams the whole night long
    Comes the music of your song.

BROKEN PINES

By Charles Hilton

Cast of Characters

Christian Lundrude, *a farmer*
Amanda Lundrude, *his wife*
Sigard, *their son*
Eric Hansen
The Reverend Ames
Robert Hall, *Justice of the peace*

Scene: *In the white-washed kitchen of the Lundrude farmhouse. There is a window in the kitchen and a door in the same wall. In the side wall there is a door which leads to another part of the house. Through the open door and window a background of mountains and hills is visible. The Kitchen is a crude, bare, clean place. There is a large table to one side of the room. Near it, on the wall is a row of shelves covered with a green curtain. Near the window is placed a chair in which the grandfather may sit and look out at the fields and the mountains. The old man is in the chair, now, half-dozing. The farmer is standing in the doorway, looking out over the yellow fields. His wife is working at the table.*

Time: *Late in the afternoon, before milking.*

Christian.—The oats are about ready to cut.

Amanda.—They are late this year. It must have been the late rains held them back.

Christian.—What does you know about it, by God!

Amanda.—It yust seem so to me. The rain lasted late this year. It is not usual for them to last so late. The hens didn't hatch off the early chickens as early as they do other years. It yust seem so to me.

Christian.—The hay didn't grow as good this year. Supposing you find a reason for that, too.

Amanda.—Hay usually grows good with wet springtimes.

Christian.—Well, the hay hasn't this year, by God, and that is yust one reason we are hard up for money now. Any coffee?

Amanda.—The coffee pot isn't on the stove, but I'll put it on. (*She quits her work, finds the coffee pot behind the curtain,* *puts coffee in it and puts it on the stove.)* Chris, you had some coffee yust an hour or, maybe, two hours ago.

Christian.—I has coffee when I wants it!

Eric (Arousing from a doze with a start).—Coffee? Yah, yah, yah, put on the pot, Amanda, girl. Men has to have lots of coffee.

Christian.—The old man's woke up.

Amanda (To Eric*).*—It's a lot of coffee you'll need. Bah!

Christian (Turning into the kitchen).—How long will it be before the coffee's cooked.

Amanda.—It'll be a while, Chris, it yust ain't even had time to boil yet. This wood ain't any good, even in the summertime when it is dry.

Eric.—Ah, that yust remind me when I first come over . . .

Amanda (With impatient sharpness).—Yust you shut up now! You have told us about that a thousand times. This makes the tenth time today.

Eric (Slinking down in his chair like a whipped dog).—Yah, yah, yah! maybe so I has.

Christian (Suddenly).—Was it the postman that stopped here today? I yust thought I saw his car down the road this morning. I thought, might be, if it wus him, he came here. Did he leave anything? I couldn't see because I wus in the pasture and the God damned brush that grows along the fence wus between me and him.

Eric (Trying to hear).—How, now? What was that you said . . .

Amanda.—Yes, it wus the postman. He . . .

Eric (Catching the word).—Ah, yah, yah, the postman. He come.

Amanda.—Shut up! Shut up, now, I say! I am tired of you yust all the time sticking in. You always sticking in . . .

Christian (Arousing to anger).—Here! Here, both of you! Shut up by God! What I want to know is whether he bring that God damned check. *(Cooling down).* I got to have it to get the oats cut with.

Amanda.—It came.

Eric (Bobbing up again).—Yah, yah. It came. Every time it come it remind me of the time, the time we stormed . . .

Amanda (Turning on him fiercely).—Shut up, I say! What's the matter with yez, huh! Can't you hear anything?

Christian.—Here, here, that ain't important! Did he sign it yet? We don't want the old man dying and leaving us with no money to get them oats cut with. This government business has got to be done yust to the letter, or nobody gets anything.

Eric (*Eagerly*).—No. I hasn't signed yet. (*Rising stiffly and awkwardly from his chair.*) Get it for me and I'll sign now. (*Sinks back into the chair in pain.*) Uff—Oh!

Amanda (*With contempt*).—You yust playing off some more for sympathy, huh? Well, you won't get no sympathy from me. You're the worst man for sympathy. (*Drying her hands and looking behind the curtain of the shelves*). You wus some man to give it yourself, I guess. I can remember our mother out washing in the rain, and you yust too cussed lazy to build a porch for her to wash under. She worked and slaved all her life fer you and no sympathy did I hear you give her. You yust took your gun and your ax to the woods, and nothing was seen of you until it got time to eat again. (*With alarm*). I wonder if I could have lost it. (*Looks deeper into the shelf. This causes a general tension.*) Oh, here it is! Help him up, Chris, I found it now.

Christian.—You better put it in the vase on the top of the cupboard shelf next time. Then you'll yust know where it is. Ve yust can't loose that. (*He helps the old man over to the table. She brings the check.*)

Eric (*Pleased*).—I see the check yust laughing at me. (*Takes the pen awkwardly*). I didn't do this this way once. I wus young and there wus not many smarter with the pen than I wus.

Amanda (*Irritated*).—Yes, you see good, now, don't you! Why you are blind as bats most of the time!

Christian.—Yes, blinder . . .

Eric.—I can see better at times than I yust can other times. That is so.

Amanda.—It yust all depend on what you want to see. (*They lead him back and place him in his chair by the window.*)

Christian.—I hasn't got time to stay here all day and wait for coffee. I'll get it when I comes back.

Amanda—The coffee will be ready in yust a minute.

Christian.—I hasn't got time now.

Amanda.—But, Chris . . .

Christian.—I tell you I hasn't got time. I am going to the pasture for the cows. (*Exits.*)

Amanda.—Chris. Chris. (*She goes to the door and looks out after him.*)

Eric (*After a time*)—What time is it?

Amanda (*Mockingly.*)—You got great eyesight. Look at the clock for yourself.

Eric.—I can't see the clock. There is something that's like a fog that comes over my eyes. It wus gone a moment ago and they wus clear, clear as seas. But I can't see the clock now. Must be getting yust about time Sigard was coming home.

Amanda (*Looking at the clock*).—Yes, he should be here now—even before this. He iss lazy, lazy as everything. He doesn't take much after the Lundrudes, nor any of my mother's people. He yust takes after your people. They are all lazy whelps like you wus yourself. You have a bad hold over that boy. You yust are the cause of him going off reading every chance he get instead of working in the fields with his father. (*The old man remains silent for a moment rubbing his hands together nervously and blinking at the shadows. The afternoon is waning.*) You make me nervous. Your hands yust go all the time. Why don't you be still? You, you. . . . (*She goes to the shelves and takes some dishes from beneath the curtain and places them on the table. The old man is silent, cowed*).

Eric (*Timidly*).—Amanda?

Amanda.—What now?

Eric.—Don't your really love me any more. I am just your father that is old. I don't want to be so much trouble to you, Amanda, girl.

Amanda.—Why should I love you, yust you tell me why?

Eric.—I don't know. I—I yust hoped.

Amanda.—Well, don't hope. What with the chickens and everything, and this a wet year, too, there is yust about all I can manage without you trying to make it worse the way you does. There'll be the oats to harvest pretty soon now. You yust make no end of work.

Eric.—I suppose I do now. I suppose I do. But Amanda?

Amanda.—Yes?

Eric.—Can I have just a little bit out of it—that pension check, for Sigard? Can I? I promised him that I would, might be.

Amanda.—You yust don't dare touch that check! If you do—(*pause*) You tried to last time. Christian needs that to pay for the oats-cutting with. I'm not going to have you get away with any more of it.

Eric.—I just thought I might give some to Sigard, just a few cents maybe. I guess it don't matter. I just thought a few cents . . .

Amanda.—Well, you better yust get such thoughts out of your head. You go getting him into all kinds of mischief as it is, you are. It is too bad you couldn't make yourself less trouble. What with chickens to feed and the oats-cut got yust about all I can do . . .

Eric (*Brokenly*).—I have lived too long, I guess.

Amanda (*In anger*).—Ha! You live to long. Not for yourself. Don't think it. (*Takes check and puts it stealthily in the vase on the top shelf of the cupboard.*) Everyday you live is just one day longer out of . . . (*pause, lowers voice*). . . you know where. (*Silence.*) You yust quit that everlasting nervous way of yours! (*There is a whoop from without.* AMANDA *at once changes her attitude from a militant aggression to one of confusion.*)

Amanda.—He's coming. (*Hurriedly looks into the coffee pot.*) Yes, it's boiling. He can have it now. (*Sets a dish of buns on the table.*) There.

Christian (*Entering*).—Any coffee yet?

Amanda (*Brings the pot from the stove to the table*).—Yes, yust come on and get it.

Christian (*Sitting carelessly down at one side of the table*).—Any lump sugar, where's the lump sugar?

Amanda.—I'll get it.

Christian (*Taking the sugar from her*).—By God, this is good coffee.

Eric.—Come, Amanda, can't I yust have a cup. It smells good. (*She does not pay any attention to him and goes on pouring out some for herself.*)

Christian.—I see that the cow with the twisted ear has cut herself somehow.

Eric.—I say, Amanda, can I have some coffee. It smells good.

Christian (*Who has not paid much attention*).—The old man wants some coffee?

Amanda.—Yes.

Christian.—Well, give him some!

Amanda.—Wait till I get back from the barn first, then you can have some coffee. I can't take time, now.

Christian.—Give it to him, by God, he can have coffee around here as well as any one else.

Amanda.—He don't need it. (*Nevertheless she gives him* *some.*)

Christian.—Where's Sigard.

Amanda.—The young wolf's not home from town yet and it's way past the time.

Christian.—He needs a beating that's he needs—to knock some sense into his head. Yust a good hard beating. Beating ain't such a good way but it's the only way there is. It wus what my old man did to me and I ain't so worse by it.

Amanda.—Yes, Chris, we yust have got to do something.

Christian.—Yes, we does. You're right about that. We can't have him yust running on this way. (*Rises and wipes his mouth.*) Separator washed yet? (*He picks up the milk pails in the corner of the room.*)

Amanda (*Tying a cloth about her head*).—Yes. Come on. Let's get the milking over.

Eric.—They are gone now. (*Laughs brokenly*). There they go down the path. Now yust are my time. Pretty soon, might be they will be coming back, yust all smelled up with the barn and the cows and the hay. (*He rises with difficulty and goes over to the shelves, rumaging behind the curtain.*) I hope Sigard don't come in now. I got my mind made up. It are yust the only way. What good does it do to be strong once when you are old. Now I look through a fog all day long and the things I see ain't right. They have drawn out hurt faces, and long, drawn out hurt hands. Young men can see good with their eyes, but they yust don't look. I could see once, good as any. I could make out the sail of boats a long way off over water, and I could yust mark out houses, and hills, and mountains. Now I don't see these things very much any more, because of the fog, might be. I see more. I see hard, cold eyes, and no love anywhere. (*He finds what he is looking for*) . Yes, here it is. I thought it was kept in here. Yes—yes—yes. (*He takes a small bottle from the shelves and hobbles, slowly, uncertainly back to his chair. He holds it up to the light with his unsteady hands so as to be sure of the label.* Yes, clear, clear as crystal. Don't taste bad. Not so bad.) Not so bad. (*He pours some of the liquid into the cup on the arm of his chair, and goes laboriously back to the cupboard where he conceals the bottle once more.*) They say in the Bible it says it's a fine thing to live to be an old one. So it might have been once, but the world have yust changed some since. An old one ain't got much place in the world. It are a time of winds and fogs and rain. (*Glances out the window.*)

My God, it are Sigard coming home at last. (*He struggles slowly back to his chair, and pretends to be dozing.* SIGARD *enters sheepishly, tossing his hat on the floor.*)

Sigard.—Grandfather?

Eric.—Ah, Sigard, is that you, back from town?

Sigard.—Yes. It is me. Where are they, Grandfather.

Eric.—They are at the barn, Sigard. They said you better hurry with the milking now. They are not pleased that you took so long time coming back from town.

Sigard.—They have been mistreating you again, Grandfather. It won't do you any good to say they haven't because I know they have.

Eric.—They yust do not understand, Sigard. They can do lots of things, plow in the field, tend chickens, but understanding they yust do not know how to do. There is not anything like an old wisdom like mine, or a young wisdom like yours. We know.

Sigard (*Thinking it over*).—Yes, I guess perhaps so. I am fourteen today, Grandfather, and they have forgotten it.

Eric.—But I didn't forget, Sigard. My pension check have come today by the mail. That yust have remind me of the time we stormed the point. That is when I got shot, Sigard. I have not known much English then. I had yust come over, it was I think, May the . . .

Sigard (*Who, during the last speech had been looking out the window, becomes alarmed*).—Yes, Grandfather, I know. You have told me about that before. Wait. They are coming into the gate now, down at the end of the pasture. I am glad they have come now, while the folks are at the barn.

Eric.—Who is that, Sigard?

Sigard.—They are Mr. Hall, you know, who is Justice of the Peace, an old Rev. Ames. They are coming to see the old man about me.

Eric.—What does they want about you, Sigard?

Sigard (*With shamed reluctance*)—Oh!

Eric.—Come, Sigard, boy, don't be afraid. I am your grandfather, and I have fought for you before this time whenever you needed me, and perhaps I can do something for you now, if you need me and it is that way. Don't be afraid to tell me yust because I am old and they do not treat me well any more.

Sigard.—It is serious, Grandfather. I don't think you could help much. I broke a window in the church. I broke it out. I did it last week, and when I saw the Rev. and the Justice coming up the road, I knew they'd found out who broke it. (*The two appear at the open door, knocking and looking in at the same time with rather embarrassed expressions.*)

Eric.—You done right to tell me, Sigard. It never do any harm to tell your grandfather. (*To the men.*) Come in, come in, ah, yust come in now a minute. Please.

Ames.—Thank you. Is Mr. Lundrude about the house?

Eric.—He are yust gone to the barn now, yust a minute ago.

Ames.—That is too bad. Our business is with him. When will he be back?

Eric (*Slowly*).—Yes, yes; he yust went to the barn.

Hall.—Then we had better go out and talk to him, don't you think, Ames.

Ames.—It looks that way. Which way is the barn, out around this way?

Eric.—It are yust down the path, this way (*pointing*) but I it would not be good for you to go down there. He are a violent man, Christian are. It would be much better if you talked to me a while, might be. I know what you come for. It would come to something to talk to me, might be. I ain't such an old one as I look.

Ames.—Shall we talk?

Hall.—Might as well. It is the money we are after.

Eric (*Catching eagerly at the word*).—Money, yes, yes, Money! You yust talk to me now, about the money. It will come to something, might be, talking to me.

Ames.—Which one says—?

Hall.—Go ahead.

Ames.—No. I think it would look better if you did. Remember I am a minister of the gospel.

Hall.—All right.

Eric (*Trying to follow the drift*).—What's that you said?

Hall.—Well, you see, Mr. Hansen, it is just this way. There has been too much delinquency among the older children of the last few months and it has got to stop: that's all. It's come to the place where it's got to stop. We are going to make an example of the mischief makers after this, but in this particular case the Rev. Mr. Ames here won't hear to the reform school—However, he does think that the window should be paid for, and that the child should be soundly punished in some way. Spare the rod and spoil the child, you see. That is the reason we came out here to see his father.

Eric.—Yes, yes, go on. I don't hear so good, might be. Go on, yes.

Hall.—Well, this is a big window, one in front of the church, and it will cost seventy dollars to replace it.

Ames.—Of course all of the window is not broken, but we wish to make this thing a lesson, and the board feel it would be well to have a new window, done to match the decorations which the ladies have had done this spring, the retouching of the interior, you know.

Eric.—How does it come, Sigard, you broke the window?

Sigard.—Iver Lasson was fighting me. He's better at fighting than I am, and I remembered your story about when you stormed the mountain in the face of the Rebels, and how brave you were when you were young, and I picked up a rock, and threw it, and the window broke out. That's all I know. The window broke, and the big glass picture of Christ in the middle fell down on the rocks outside and broke.

Ames (Doggedly).—Well, anyway the window is broken, shattered.

Eric.—Seventy dollars did you say to yust fix in that window again? (*He sits and muses a long time, rubbing his old, feeble hands over the arms of his chair.* SIGARD *stands aside with drooped head.*) Seventy dollars yust to fix him up.

Hall (Pulling out his watch).—Come, now, we can't stay here all night, you know. I should be home at supper right now.

Eric.—Give me a few minutes more. I think I yust be able to pay it. I think it yust will be so. (*Idea, half rising in his chair.*) Sigard, Sigard, hurry now and come here. (*He comes to his grandfather.*) That are it, Sigard, help me up. Now. We will go over to the shelves now, might be. Yes. My pension check have come today. (SIGARD *helps him slowly across the floor.*)

Eric.—Reach up there, Sigard, on the top shelf. (SIGARD *looks.*) Find it?

Sigard (Looking).—I can't find it.

Eric.—Look again, real good. Find it?

Sigard.—No.

Eric.—It's a yellow slip of paper with government marks on it.

Sigard.—But I can't find it.

Eric—But it yust got to be there. He came today.

Sigard.—I looked every place.

Ames.—It doesn't seem that they have any money. This seems a waste of time to me.

Hall.—So it is. We should have gone out to the barn in the first place. It is always best to deal with the proper authorities in these matters, you know.

Ames (*To* HALL).—Probably you are right. (*To* ERIC). Can't you find your money?

Eric.—Ja, Ja, yust wait now. I think I remember. Sigard, Sigard, look in the vase on the top of the shelf. Might be it is there. (SIGARD *climbs up and gets the vase and they look eagerly into it, together.*) You yust see him there, Sigard?

Sigard (*Taking out the check.*)—But this is the money father intends to get the oats cut with!

Eric (*Eagerly taking it*)—Yes, yes, might be.

Sigard.—But what will he do about it? What will he do about the oats, getting them cut?

Eric.—It yust don't matter, Sigard, about the oats-cutting now. Help me back to my chair, Sigard. (*They go back slowly, and seat him again.*) There, now. Now run up the stairs fast as you can to my room. Pull back the old trunk that are standing in the corner of my room, the one with the pictures on top of it. Then pull away the mopboards that are near the corner. There are a piece loose that you will see. Might be you will find a sack inside, yust a small one. Hurry up before your father comes. He might be coming back now, any time. (SIGARD *goes out.*)

Hall.—How much money have you there, Hansen?

Eric.—There are here yust thirty dollars.

Hall.—And do you think you can get the rest of it?

Eric—Might be. I don't know. It have been years since.

Hall.—What do you think, Reverend? Shall we wait.

Ames.—It seems only fair, now. (*They wait silently a moment. The stage has been growing darker.* AMES *moves over to the door and looks out.*) There are clouds coming up over here. I wonder if it will rain before we get back to town?

Hall.—Maybe. You can't tell about the weather in this country. (*Enter* SIGARD *with a small bag in his hand.*)

Sigard (*Joyfully*).—I found it. It was there.

Eric (*Moved*).—Bring it here, Sigard. Open it up, I yust don't see well enough. There now. Count it out, Sigard. How much money are there in it.

Sigard (*Looking closely at the coins*).—There are three ten-dollar ones, and one five-dollar one, and four dollar ones. They are all old ones.

Eric.—That are sixty-nine dollars. I have been saving up these coins ever since I wasn't much older than you are, Sigard. They are what I saved out of my first years' wages that I earned after I came over here. I thought might be they would come in handy and be needed someday. And so it have happened. I had forgot about putting them there, lately. I have forgot a great deal.

Sigard.—But won't you need them any more? You are going to give them all for me?

Eric.—Ja, Sigard, it ain't much. You are the only one who wus good to me while I wus an old one. When I wus young, I was straight and strong and had blue eyes. I had friends because men wus afraid of me, and women fell in love with me because I was strong. Now that I am old, Sigard, and can't see nothing, I have learned more of wisdom than I knew then. Wisdom springs from suffering, suffering. That yust be wisdom for you, preacher!

Ames.—Yes, I dare say. Suffering has many a little lesson. It is an aid to a good Christian life.

Eric.—Here are your money, all but one dollar. We haven't got no more.

Hall.—But that isn't seventy dollars. (*The old man shrinks back into his chair, disappointed, letting escape his lips a little moaning sight. And idea suddenly occurs to* SIGARD. *He dashes out of the room.*)

Sigard.—I've got it, grandfather, I've got it!

Eric.—What have you got, Sigard.

Ames.—What could possibly be on the child's mind.

Hall.—I couldn't say.

Anes.—Perhaps we better. After all it is only a dollar, you know.

Hall.—No. I want this to be an object lesson. This has got to stop.

Ames.—Well, maybe you are right. We can't give them too much freedom. (SIGARD *returns with a savings bank from which he manages to jimmy a quantity of change.*)

Ames.—Really, is the lad doing right by taking money out of that bank? I question the ethics of such conduct!

Eric.—Ja, Ja, it wus his bank. (*To* SIGARD.) Do that make up the right amount, Sigard?

Sigard (*With joy*).—It is . . . All of it now. Give it to them. Let them take it.

Eric.—Here it are. Take it now, every cent of it!

Ames.—Thank you very much. (*Takes the money and pockets it. The two move toward the door.* AMES *stops and looks back.*) Won't you come out to church some time, Mr. Hansen. Good-afternoon. (*They go out.*)

Eric (*Bitterly*).—Ja, ja, they better hurry. They might get wet with the rain.

Sigard (*Relieved*).—They are gone!

Eric (*Thoughtfully*).—Ja, Sigard, they wus gone. And I saved up that money all my life for yust this. (*To* SIGARD.) Don't say anything about all these to your father, Sigard. I'll fix it up. Better run on out to the barn, now. He is in a bad temper. You better hurry up quick.

Sigard.—But what will father and mother do about the check we took. It will be terrible for us. We can't tell them anything. What will they do.

Eric.—Don't you worry no more, Sigard. They won't storm this time. I have a plan that will fix that up. Run along, now, and don't lose no time. (*The darkness has deepened and there is a wind.*)

Christian's Voice (*From without*).—Sigard! Sigard! Hi! Is Sigard in there!

Eric.—Run along, quick! He's coming.

Sigard.—Yes, father, coming!

Christian's Voice.—Bring our coats, then! It is going to rain. Be quick! (*A sudden sound of wind.*)

Eric (*Suddenly looking out of the window*).—Sigard, Sigard, come. Look. There is a wind. Hear it? See the mountain out across there. You yust have eyes and can see. I can't see, but I can remember them getting black when the storm comes. Over there, Sigard, the wind goes moaning in the pines. They are strong, big straight trees, Sigard, but I have seen the wind break them, big strong, pines . . . You cannot see the wind.

Sigard (*With an arm full of coats*).—Yes, grandfather, but I got to go.

Christian's Voice.—Sigard!

Sigard (*Going out*).—Goodby, grandfather!

Eric.—Goodby, Sigard.

Eric (*Taking up the cup and looking at it*).—It are yust strange. It are a funny thing to live and die this way, it are funny. (*Drinks suddenly from the cup, shudders with a fit of revolt.*) We are young, and straight like pines, and we are strong, and our eyes are yust as blue as blue, but then we get old, by and by, might be, and a grey fog settles down over them. Funny thing. Funny. It are yust only when the fog come over them that we really learn to see. But it doesn't matter no more. The wind breaks us . . . yust a little thing like the wind. (*The poison takes effect, he writhes painfully a few minutes, slips from his chair to the floor.*)

The pines . . . are broken . . . on . . . the mountain . . .

CURTAIN

ESTABLISHED 1889

HE OLDEST AND LARGEST REVIEW IN THE ENGLISH LANGUA

EVOTED TO POETRY AND DRAM

Poet Lore

World Literature & the Drama

Winter Number

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By L. Miller

The Germ of the Domestic Drama,
By Felix Sper

Widows' Eyes, A Comedy in One Act
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(Complete Contents on Inside Cover)

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MR. MAN[1]

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS AND EIGHT SCENES

By L. Miller

Translated from the Yiddish by S. K. Padover and Chasye Cooperman

Characters in Order of Their Appearance

He Who Can't Find His Way Out
The Drunkard
The Winner
Insurance Broker
First Manufacturer
Comely Woman
Realtor
First Creditor
La Pamme
He Who Seeks a Favor
Judge Benson
Banker
MacLaughlin (Mr. Man's *Attorney)*
Mr. Man: (*His First, Second, Third, Fourth Selves and the Self With the Sad Smile, also some Lesser Selves)*
A Primadonna
Miss Donald (Mr. Man's *Secretary)*
Mr. Man's Uncle
An Office Girl
Rich Madame
Puny Creditor
Ellen (Mr. Man's *Wife)*
Creditors, Hotel Guests and Employees

Time: *The Present.*
Place: *Big American City.*

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ACT I

SCENE I

(Late Friday night, almost morning. The lobby of a modern office-building. At the rear, to the right and left, elevators with modern equipment. Above, the elevators are numerous indicators.

In the center between the two rows of elevators, is a wide marble staircase.

On two large bulletin boards appear the names of the tenants.

Above the elevators, to the right, is a large sign, "Barber and Manicurist"; to the left, "Night Club."

The spaciousness is impressive; there are vast corridors which lead to the various exits. Only a few of the electric lights are lit. The indicators (over the elevators) are not in operation. The doors are closed.

On the whole the atmosphere is that of desertedness and darkness, as of early morning hours.

From the floor above, in the rooms of an amusement club, there still linger some late guests. The sounds of jazz instruments are faintly heard as the curtain rises;

The footsteps of HE WHO CAN'T FIND HIS WAY OUT *are heard. He descends the stairs with the air of one who is agitated and dissatisfied with himself; he stops in front of the clock.)*

He Who Can't Find His Way Out (To himself lost in thought).—Tough! Bad luck! *(Removes his watch from his pocket, looks at the clock, adjusts his watch and winds it mechanically; he remains standing in an attitude of dejection.)* To the last cent! *(Slowly searching his pockets; one by one he turns them inside out. For a few moments he stands with his hands in his hip pockets, smiling with resignation and self-contempt.)* Cleaned out! *(He is undecided as to what direction to take, takes several steps to the right, changes his mind, turns about and disappears left.)*

*(*THE DRUNKARD *descends the stairs. He walks as if every step were a span across a chasm. Sings in a hoarse voice, lines of a current popular hit.)*

(Laughs to himself, his giggle is jerky, spasmodic. He stops; his eyes are closed and his head sways. Suddenly he waves his hand over his face, tosses his head as if shaking off cold water, and turns to a third exit; his steps are awkward; still mumbling. . . .)

*(*THE WINNER *comes down. He moves slowly, counting a wad of bills as he walks. Then he unfolds several checks and puts them in order; he carefully inspects some of them, removes a leather wallet from his breast-pocket into which he puts the even wad of money; the wallet is then carefully concealed in the back-pocket of his trousers, the pocket buttoned. Slapping it with contentment.)*

The Winner.—God damn it. *(Off to right.)*

(The INSURANCE BROKER *and the* FIRST MANUFACTURER *seen at the top of the staircase, conversing as they descend.)*

Insurance Broker.—God, how he squanders his money, the damned fool.

First Manufacturer.—What a pity.

Insurance Broker.—Pity—, hell.

First Manufacturer.—He's a decent fellow.

Insurance Broker.—He's an ass!

First Manufacturer.—Did you write him up?

Insurance Broker.—Could have signed him up for fifty thousand!—

First Manufacturer.—Come too late?

Insurance Broker.—Signed up for ten.

First Manufacturer.—A year's premium in advance?

Insurance Broker.—Got the check on the spot.

First Manufacturer.—Did it go through?

Insurance Broker.—What the check?

First Manufacturer.—No the policy.

Insurance Broker.—Oh! the policy did; but the check came back.

First Manufacturer.—You don't say so! He must be in a pretty bad fix.

Insurance Broker.—And how!

First Manufacturer.—Did he make the check good?

Insurance Broker.—I've made him come across.

First Manufacturer.—You are certainly independent.

Insurance Broker.—What the hell; he is played out.

First Manufacturer.—I am sorry for the man.

Insurance Broker.—Serves him right.

First Manufacturer.—Why, he was a Santa Claus to many a sponger.

Insurance Broker.—Why not help a sucker get rid of his money?

First Manufacturer.—Has he nothing left?

Insurance Broker.—Nothing but debts.

First Manufacturer.—And his business, what about that?

Insurance Broker.—Not his.

First Manufacturer.—But people owe him a fortune.

Insurance Broker.—Not worth a continental.

First Manufacturer.—That snappy dame, the primadonna. She must be a costly jewel.

Insurance Broker.—And she isn't getting anything for nothing either!

First Manufacturer.—You have to admit she is beautiful.

Insurance Broker.—His own wife is prettier.

First Manufacturer.—But this one knows how to play the game.

Insurance Broker.—I wish I had the money she's lost today.

First Manufacturer.—His money, eh?

Insurance Broker.—What do you think, hers?

First Manufacturer.—As long as it isn't ours.

Insurance Broker (Poking him in the ribs).—Isn't his money ours too? *(Both exit right.)*

(Enter the REALTOR *and the* COMELY WOMAN.*)*

Comely Woman.—He asked for your permission to dance with me?

Realtor.—I'll say he did; at court he is judge, here we are all equals.

Comely Woman.—He kept constantly at my side.

Realtor.—That old fogey can't resist a pretty skirt!

Comely Woman.—Such a gentleman, too.

Realtor.—I shouldn't like to fall into his clutches. . . .

Comely Woman.—When I sat near him at a card table . . .

Realtor.—You seemed to bring him luck. . . .

Comely Woman.—He asked for a date. . . .

Realtor.—He would. . . .

Comely Woman.—Ought I to go?

Realtor.—Why not, you'll have a good time.

Comely Woman.—Besides, his acquaintance is worth while, you know.

Realtor.—Exactly why I joined this club.

Comely Woman.—You mean he might come in handy. . . .

Realtor.—If you know your business. . . .

Comely Woman.—Leave it to me! . . .

Realtor.—But no appointments this week.

Comely Woman.—Why, is your wife leaving?

Realtor.—I finally managed to persuade her.

Comely Woman.—The children going along too?

Realtor.—Yes, I'll be quite free all week. . . .

Comely Woman.—At your place?

Realtor.—By far the safest, you know.

Comely Woman.—You devil! . . .

Realtor.—You dear! . . .

(Exit left.)

(The FIRST MANUFACTURER *and the* INSURANCE BROKER *reappear.)*

Insurance Broker.—Well, well! His wife can still visit summer resorts, I guess.

First Manufacturer.—Perhaps for her health.

Insurance Broker.—Health? health, hell!

First Manufacturer.—It is the fashion, you know.

Insurance Broker.—My wife stays at home.

First Manufacturer.—Gee! You are stingy. . . .

Insurance Broker.—Bills come first.

First Manufacturer.—Funds low?

Insurance Broker.—Whatever I have is my own; I've never robbed or borrowed. . . .

First Manufacturer.—You are grouchy!

Insurance Broker.—I hate to see people squander their money.

(Exit left.)

*(*HE WHO CAN'T FIND HIS WAY OUT *appears once more. His walk is slow and limp; he halts for a second confusedly, shrugs his shoulders and mutters to himself as if complaining to someone.)*

He Who Can't Find His Way Out.—One thousand exits and all are locked! By Jove! *(He waits a moment at the foot of the stairs; but nobody appears and he goes off right.)*

(LA PAMME *and* FIRST CREDITOR *appear. They are con-*

versing earnestly stopping at intervals, being highly engrossed in what they have to say.)

First Creditor.—Well, if that man can get out of the Dawson Street muddle with his shirt on, he's great.

La Pamme.—He was smart enough to coin all that money in such a short time.

First Creditor.—He lost it soon enough.

La Pamme.—He may get out of the muddle yet.

First Creditor.—Whether he gets out or not, he certainly got me in with a big lump.

La Pamme.—And you are not the only one.

First Creditor.—And I thought he was a good sort.

La Pamme.—They do think well of him in the business world.

First Creditor.—Just make a million and they will even think well of you. . . .

La Pamme.—I have no brain for making millions. . . .

First Creditor.—The less you use your head, the better. . . .

La Pamme.—This explains why you are rich, eh?

(They exit right while JUDGE BENSON *and* HE WHO SEEKS A FAVOR *descend the stairs.)*

He Who Seeks a Favor.—Just what I say. This is an amusement club. I say, do you want to play cards? Then play. Want to drink? Drink. Dance? Dance. Once you've paid your thousand you're entitled to your pleasure. What do you say, Judge?

Judge Benson (Abstractedly).—Ha? . . . Yes, yes. . . .

He Who Seeks a Favor.—My idea is this. If you want culture, go to a culture club. Politics? Go to a political club. If you're looking for a good time, this is just the place. What do you say, Judge?

Judge Benson.—Ha? . . . Yes, yes. . . . Who's that woman?

He Who Seeks a Favor (Promptly).—So what do you say, Judge? May I mention your name to Mr. Man?

Judge Benson.—Ha? My name? . . . Oh, yes, yes . . . tell him I sent you. I'm sure he'll help you.

He Who Seeks a Favor (Suddenly vivacious).—That's what I call a favor. I'll say you sent me. Splendid!

Judge Benson.—You may even ask him to call me.

He Who Seeks a Favor.—That's it. He's to call you, you say? Great! I'll ask him to call you. That's fine. Just what I call a favor. I'll surely tell him to do so, Judge. *(Exit left.)*

(Enter MacLaughlin *and the* Banker*; they walk in a dignified manner, and speak in moderate voices.)*

Banker.—Frankly, I do not see how he can avoid it.

MacLaughlin.—If he could only find his way out of the Dawson Street complication.

Banker.—Our bank cannot allow him another cent, you know.

MacLaughlin.—I see that, yes.

Banker.—I understand that you are Mr. Man's attorney. I can speak quite frankly?

MacLaughlin.—Please do.

Banker.—We ought to find a way to save the estate.

MacLaughlin.—With your cooperation.

Banker.—I am ready to cooperate with you, MacLaughlin.

MacLaughlin.—That's excellent.

Banker.—For his sake, you know.

MacLaughlin.—Yes, of course, of course.

Banker.—If the forty thousand he owes the bank could be secured . . .

MacLaughlin.—Of course, that's understood, so long as we can save the situation.

Banker.—If the bank is secured, the others, we will manage.

MacLaughlin.—As long as you are with us I am confident the rest will follow.

Banker.—Nothing would please me more than to be of use to Man.

MacLaughlin.—Splendid!

(Right and left appear the guests; those who had previously appeared upon the scene. They are all talking at once.)

—All the doors are closed.

—What's the idea? Not a door open!

—That's nice. How do they expect us to get out?

—I guess we won't get out.

—And no one has a key?

—What do you mean? . . . No one has a key.

—That's just what I say. No one seems to have a key.

—What's the grand idea?

Banker (Slowly and calmly he passes their midst with great *pride).*—I have the key. *(He walks at the head of the group; they all follow him overjoyed.)*

—Let's follow the banker.

—You can't go wrong following the banker.

(They all disappear.)

*(*Mr. Man *and his many* Selves *appear upon the stairs. He is the tallest among them.)*

First Self (Dressed in a black silk dressing-gown; under it a flesh colored, tight fitting suit. He is tall and handsome.)

Second Self (Short, fat and pudgy; he is dressed in a tuxedo.)

Third Self (Short, thin, wears a smoking jacket, a top-hat, patent leather, high-heeled shoes and white gloves. He carries a cane, wears a pince-nez attached to a cord. In general his appearance is comical.)

Fourth Self (Carries pockets full of cigars and cigarettes. He is always prompt in supplying Mr. Man *with smokes. He offers cigars and cigarettes to everybody; smokes incessantly. Two silver flasks bulge from his hip pockets. He is bony, with a yellow face, yellow teeth, nicotined stained fingers and a red nose. He coughs at intervals. His general appearance is slovenly.)*

The Lesser Selves (There are six in number; they resemble one another; they are all short and ape-like; they act simultaneously; they are dressed in the manner of the Second Self.*)*

He With the Sad Smile (He is dressed in a neat gray suit. He does not mingle with the others; he is near Mr. Man *whenever the latter is alone.)*

(All the Selves *bear a marked resemblance to* Mr. Man.*)*

(While Mr. Man *is standing at the head of the staircase, surrounded by his many* Selves *with whom he is bickering.* He With the Sad Smile *rushes down the stairs, as if fearing to be detained. He stops at the foot of the stairs, standing somewhat aside. His face expresses fatigue and boredom. He yawns, remains waiting in an attitude of apathy.)*

Mr. Man (Energetically, to the other Selves *who continue to molest him).*—No! No! No! Home, now! We'll go home.

(At these words, the circle of Selves *retreats, as if they had been pushed back by an unknown force.* Mr. Man *is agitated.)*

Selves.—Home? Nonsense.

He With the Sad Smile.—Man! Let's go home.

Mr. Man.—Home! . . . Who shall I listen to *(indicating)* this part of me or that?

He With the Sad Smile (Pleadingly).—Please!

Mr. Man.—They are the greater part of me. You are in the minority. *(He strokes his face as if attempting to smooth away fatigue and strain. He throws his head backward, and shuts his tired eyes.)*

(The PRIMADONNA *approaches him. They have apparently been waiting for her. She is joyful, takes his arm. He starts lightly and forces a smile.)*

Primadonna.—Are we off to my place now, eh?

He With the Sad Smile (Beckons plaintively).—Man!

Mr. Man (Appearing not to have heard and smiling to the PRIMADONNA*).*—Should we? So late?

Primadonna (Coquettishly).—Better late than never!

(The circle of SELVES *is broken; the* PRIMMADONNA *escorts* MR. MAN *to the exit; the four* SELVES *follow closely behind, in single file. Their resemblance to each other is especially striking because of sharp and Harlequin-like features which they all possess. They walk in file and sway to the beat of the song, thus dancing as they descend the stairs.)*

What a night . . .
What a night . . .
Such is fame!
Such is might!
Things are always much the same . . .
The power of gold.
The power of gold.

How money sings!
The world's—a bell
And gold its knell
And we're the rope.
Oh, how it rings
Of fame; of hope
Of Joy
Of might
What a night!
What a night!

(The LESSER SELVES *linked as in a chain descend the staircase. They jazz in the manner of the* GREATER SELVES *swaying*

to the beat of the song. When the GREATER SELVES *have left, the* LESSER SELVES *who are following them, take up the song where the other have left it.)*

Lesser Selves.—

What a night!
What a night!
Man and we, his many selves
Have danced and laughed with much delight
Among the swell ones of the town
Among the swell ones of the town
Now to sleep
Oh, now to sleep
With the primadonna.

*(*HE WHO CAN'T FIND HIS WAY OUT *enters. He seems lost and helpless. Notices the* LESSER SELVES.*)*

He Who Can't Find His Way Out (In despair).—So many doors . . . So many doors . . . And no way out. . . .

Lesser Selves (Form a ring around him, whirl about him, dancing and singing in unison, all performing the same gestures at the same time).—

Can't you ever find your way? . . .
Can't you ever find your way? . . .
You get out as you got in—
Little foolish maniken—
Lost astray—
Here's the way.

(They grab his hands and drag him towards the exit, still singing.)

*(*HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *lingers alone; then he too tears himself from the spot and follows them, worn and discontented. The song continues to be heard from outside.)*

SCENE II

(A few hours later. Shortly before noon, Saturday. MR. MAN'S *office. There are two desks; one is* MR. MAN'S *and the other is his Secretary's; several chairs; a door leading to* MR. MAN'S *private office.)*

*(*MISS DONALD, MR. MAN'S *Secretary, a young lady of about twenty, attractive, neatly dressed, is seated at her desk.*

She seems to be anxious about something; she continually glances towards the clock in nervous expectancy.)

*(*REALTOR, *waiting impatiently for* MR. MAN.*)*

(The telephone rings. MISS DONALD *snatches the receiver.)*

Miss Donald.—New Realty Company . . . Mr. Man? No, not yet. . . . I expect him in any minute. . . . Yes, as soon as he arrives. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Good-bye. *(Replaces the receiver and remains sitting dejectedly.)* I do wish he would telephone! *(Suddenly she remembers the waiting* REALTOR. *Somewhat embarrassed.)* I'm sure he'll be here shortly. *(The telephone rings again; she eagerly snatches the receiver.)* New Realty Company . . . I'm sorry, he hasn't come in yet. Good-bye. *(She replaces the receiver with an air of guilt.)*

Realtor (Impatiently, looks at his watch).—The bank will be closed soon.

Miss Donald (With an air of guilt).—He should have been back hours ago. I can't understand . . .

Realtor (Irritated).—A fine time for staying out. *(Looks at his watch again.)* I won't be in time for the bank.

(The telephone rings.)

Miss Donald (Snatching the receiver).—That must be Mr. Man. *(Answers the phone.)* Hello! The Public Bank? . . . I'm sorry. He hasn't come yet. . . . Oh, any minute. . . . Yes, surely . . . I'll tell him. Surely. Thank you.

*(*FIRST MANUFACTURER *enters; he is agitated.)*

First Manufacturer (Enraged).—Say, where's that check you promised to mail?

Miss Donald (Frightened).—Mr. Man is out.

First Manufacturer.—Never mind Mr. Man. What about the promise?

Miss Donald (Tearfully).—I can't do a thing without Mr. Man. Please wait a while. He'll be here soon.

First Manufacturer.—I can't wait. It's pay day. I must have the check at once.

Miss Donald.—He ought to be here any minute.

First Manufacturer.—I can't wait. I can't wait. *(He runs out. Slams the door.)*

*(*REALTOR *gets up suddenly, imitates* FIRST MANUFACTURER*; runs out, slams the door. The telephone rings again.)*

Miss Donald.—Hello. No, not yet . . . I can't understand it, myself. I'm sure he'll be here soon. He must. *(Holds* *receiver for a few seconds; then hangs it up. Dries her tears. Steps are heard. Suddenly sits up, listens.* MR. MAN *enters. He is sleepy, upset; his manner is that of one who is in helpless perplexity.)*

(The SELVES *who trot lazily at his heels, blandly march into* MR. MAN'S *private office; with the exception of* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE, *who huddles himself into a corner, so that he can hardly be seen.)*

Mr. Man (Not looking at MISS DONALD*).*—Hello . . . I'm late . . . *(Goes up to his desk and examines the stack of opened letters and the file of papers, absent-mindedly. He never once raises his eyes.)* Was anybody here? Did anyone telephone?

Miss Donald (Embarrassed).—Mrs. Man telephoned several times.

Mr. Man.—Who else?

Miss Donald.—The bank called about the note.

Mr. Man.—Yes, this is the last day. . . . Who else?

Miss Donald.—Mrs. Man asked you to telephone her immediately.

Mr. Man (Troubled).—Was anybody here?

Miss Donald.—Quite a few people.

Mr. Man (With a sigh).—Anything else?

Miss Donald (Consulting her memorandum).—Mr. La Pamme telephoned and asked you to call him back. Shall I ring Mrs. Man?

Mr. Man.—And nobody else telephoned?

Miss Donald (Embarrassed).—The check you sent to the Universal . . .

Mr. Man (Assuming indifference).—What's the matter with it?

Miss Donald.—They telephoned . . .

Mr. Man.—Who spoke to you?

Miss Donald.—The office girl. They sent the check back to the bank.

Mr. Man.—Fifteen hundred . . . What's the balance in the bank?

Miss Donald (Examines the book, embarrassed).—Eighty-seven, twenty-six . . .

Mr. Man.—Hmm. . . . And I have seven hundred with me.

Miss Donald (Joyfully).—Shall I take it to the bank?

Mr. Man.—No. Did my uncle call?

Miss Donald.—No.

Mr. Man.—I must give him five hundred.

Miss Donald.—On account of the thousand he left with you for safe-keeping?

Mr. Man.—Yes. *(Sighs.)* A nice sort of safe-keeping! *(Suddenly getting up courage.)* Get Mrs. Man on the wire.

Miss Donald (Calls the number. MR. MAN *removes the receiver from the hook of his extension and listens.)*

Mr. Man (Feigning calmness).—Hello, Ellen . . . *(He smiles forcedly.)* It's the prodigal. I telephoned three times. . . . Something was wrong with the wire. I can't understand it. I couldn't get home. No. . . . At the club. Had to see someone urgently. . . . Very important. What? Hello. Hello . . . *(To* MISS DONALD.*)* Please ring that number once more. *(Waits smiling nervously.)* Hello, why did you hang up? Wait now, let me explain. . . . I'm telling you, I called three times. . . . Don't be silly. Listen to what I have to say, will you. I'm coming home early today. Don't be absurd. I'm coming home . . . All right, as you please. . . . Suit yourself. Very well. . . . Money? I'll send it over at once. What? Where? To your mother's? All right. I'll send it there. If you want me to, I can come home immediately. No? Very well. Suit yourself. . . . I've explained that. . . . Hello, hello. *(He replaces the receiver slowly, remains sitting dejectedly.)*

Miss Donald (Pretending not to have heard anything).—Old man Barnes was here about a second mortgage on his house on Lafayette.

Mr. Man (Absent-mindedly).—The house on Lafayette. . .

Miss Donald.—A second mortgage.

Mr. Man (Abstractedly).—A second mortgage . . . On what? On his house on Lafayette? *(He wakes up with a start.)* What? No. Of course not. How can I?

Miss Donald.—He said he'd be here Monday morning.

Mr. Man.—Did anyone telephone about those Dawson Houses?

Miss Donald.—No, not a soul.

Mr. Man.—Is that ad running in the papers?

Miss Donald.—There was someone here from the Tribune.

Mr. Man.—So soon?

Miss Donald.—Last month's bill. We owe three hundred and twenty dollars.

Mr. Man (Absent-mindedly). Last month's bill? *(He suddenly snatches the telephone; then restrains himself.)* Please get Mrs. Man on the wire again. *(She is about to unhook the receiver.)* No, never mind. . . . *(Sighs.)* How much did you say? Three hundred and twenty? *(Feigning light-heartedness.)* Not so good, eh?

Miss Donald.—Perhaps you should see the president of the bank.

Mr. Man (Abstractedly).—Was the auditor here?

Miss Donald (Searches among her papers).—These are the accounts. *(While* MR. MAN *examines the reports, she watches him eagerly, never once removing her eyes from him.)*

*(*MR. MAN *raises his head; their eyes meet; he notices her great concern and quickly lowers his head. Sighs.)*

Mr. Man.—Not worth a crooked penny!

Miss Donald (The telephone rings; she unhooks the receiver, her eyes questioning his.)

Mr. Man (Snatches the receiver from her).—Hello—Who? Mr. La Pamme? *(Disappointed.)* Mr. La Pamme? . . . *(Shrugs his shoulders, indicating that he does not know the name.)* Campaign manager? Of what hospital? The Peoples Hospital? Oh, yes . . . hm . . . hm . . . yes, yes. . . . A banquet tonight? I'm sorry . . . no . . . *(While he is talking, the* SECOND SELF *enters and listens eagerly.)* No . . . impossible. . . . Who? . . . Judge who? . . . Wishes to speak to me? Very well. . . . *(The* SECOND SELF *gently pushes him off, takes the receiver, and speaks in the name of* MR. MAN.*)*

Second Self.—Hello, Judge. Yes, certainly. . . . Why, of course. . . . You know how busy I am, but I'll manage. . . . Who, I? Program Committee? In the newspapers? That's good news. . . . Why, certainly. . . . Of course I'll be there. . . . I'll do my utmost! Certainly, certainly. Times are a bit bad but . . . you understand, Judge, that I'll . . . Good-bye. . . . *(To* MR. MAN.*)* Can't make a fool of yourself. . . .

Mr. Man.—I won't give them one penny.

Second Self.—You don't have to. . . . Easy to wriggle out of it. . . . How would it look? . . . Judge Benson phoned, and you . . . *(He slowly re-enters the private office.)*

*(*He With the Sad Smile *raises himself a bit and looks at* Mr. Man.*)*

Mr. Man (Irritated; to himself).—Program Committee! Honors! More honors! It seems that is all we are after.

He With the Sad Smile.—Not I!

Mr. Man.—You are only a small part of me. . . .

Miss Donald (Reminding him).—You ought perhaps to see the president of the bank.

Mr. Man.—What for? Useless. I owe him ten thousand right now and there's a note for twenty thousand that'll fall due soon enough.

Miss Donald.—There are more than twenty-five thousand other pressing payments to be made. . . .

Mr. Man.—That isn't all. The noose is tightening. . . . The end is near. Perhaps it's for the best. . . . I'm tired of it all. . . .

(Enter the Uncle*; his dress is simple, that of a workman; he is in the latter forties, slim and tall; his face is that of a good-natured and understanding person.)*

Uncle.—Hello, Rockefeller! How do you do, Miss Donald?

Mr. Man (Pleased).—Hello, uncle. You've an easy time of it, old man.

Uncle.—I'll say so! Now that I'm a millionaire-philanthropist's relative! Soft! Should I have sent my card in . . . eh?

Mr. Man (Forcing gaiety).—You know you have always been a privileged caller.

Uncle.—Every millionaire has some poor kinsman, some relative to look after. . . . Sort of a court jester, a privileged nuisance.

Mr. Man (In jest).—If that's so, why did you neglect your duties?

Uncle.—Couldn't get to you. All those big shots, you know. . . . D'you expect anyone to notice a pauper with so many swells around?

Mr. Man.—It might please you to hear that I'll be joining you and your paupers pretty soon.

Uncle.—No one would like it better than I. What's wrong? Up against it?

Mr. Man.—Your thousand is still safe. Don't worry.

Uncle (In jest).—I wouldn't mind taking an honest-to-goodness look at it, all the same.

Mr. Man (In jest).—I can repay you five hundred on the spot.

Uncle (As before).—Well, that's better than nothing.

*(*Mr. Man *takes money from his pocket; counts five hundred and lays the sum of money on the desk.)*

Uncle (Refusing the money).—Well, you're not as broke as you boast. . . . ! I only wanted to see. . . .

Mr. Man.—Take it as long as the taking is good. You may have a harder time chasing the other five hundred.

Uncle.—I don't need it yet.

Mr. Man.—I mean it! You'd better take it before others do.

He With the Sad Smile.—Yes, a synagogue, a church, or perhaps an international home for the aged.

Mr. Man.—What's the difference. The important thing is the giving. . . .

He With the Sad Smile.—And first come, first served.

Mr. Man.—They may all come now.

Uncle.—Are you so sure?

Mr. Man.—Bankrupt, my good fellow.

Uncle.—That's swell! Then you surely do need the five hundred.

Mr. Man.—Don't be an ass! Take what's given to you.

Uncle.—I won't have it!

Mr. Man.—Take it, I tell you.

Uncle (Taking the money).—I'm not kidding. If you need the money, keep it. I don't need it.

Mr. Man.—What I need is thousands, tens of thousands. . . . Your paltry five hundred . . .

Uncle.—Come now, none of your high-hatting stuff! Five hundred is nothing to be sneezed at.

Mr. Man.—I envy you. . . .

Uncle.—You shouldn't have been so reckless.

Mr. Man.—Money comes, money goes.

Uncle (Laughs).

Mr. Man.—You have no idea the havoc money plays with one. . . .

Uncle.—Of course, those who know how to handle dough . . .

Mr. Man.—. . . Don't know how to live.

Uncle.—If that's so, you ought to feel happy now.

Mr. Man.—If it weren't for the after-effects. . . .

Uncle.—So, it's the money you had that's driving you.

Mr. Man.—Alas . . . the money I used to have. . . .

Uncle.—Doggone the power of money!

Mr. Man.—If you only knew how tired I am of it all!

Uncle.—And I thought you got out of our class for good.

Mr. Man.—The sooner I'm back with you again, the better.

Uncle.—You're welcome. What a pity your money didn't go to those who needed it!

Mr. Man.—Those that have it, need it. Their lives would be worthless without it. . . . *(Suddenly.)* D'you want to do me a favor?

*(*UNCLE *looks at him questioningly.)*

Mr. Man.—Take one hundred to my wife. She's at her mother's.

Uncle.—Aren't you going home?

Mr. Man.—Family quarrel. My fault . . . especially lately. . . . Married a rich man and now . . . no money, no wife!

He With the Sad Smile.—It's not true. You were at fault.

Mr. Man.—I really am guilty, too. *(Abruptly.)* Oh well, here is the hundred dollars.

Uncle.—Won't she resent a third person being mixed up. . .

Mr. Man.—On the contrary, you'll be a welcome guest; especially . . .

(Hands him the hundred dollars.)

Uncle.—Now that I have so much dough, I think I'll run. . . . Good-bye.

(They shake hands heartily.)

Mr. Man (Remains seated, lost in thought. The SELVES *enter slowly. The* FIRST SELF *approaches* MISS DONALD*; the* SECOND SELF *approaches* MR. MAN.*)*

*(*MR. MAN *rises.)* Well, I didn't lose much today . . . *(Corrects himself.)* . . . I mean, I didn't do much.

Miss Donald (Feeling the gaze of the FIRST SELF*).*—You should have been here in the morning; the place was actually mobbed!

Mr. Man.—How did you get rid of them?

Miss Donald.—I told them that you had been here very early and had left on important business.

Mr. Man (He looks at her with gratitude; gets up. Hesitates in embarrassment, goes up to her quickly).—What are you doing tonight?

Miss Donald (Lowers her head).—Tonight? Nothing. . . . *(*First Self *approaches her more closely.)*

Mr. Man (Embarrassed).—If you have nothing pressing this evening, we might . . .

Miss Donald.—If there is work you want me to do, I'll gladly come. . . .

Mr. Man.—No. I mean . . . would you like to spend the evening with me?

Second Self (Approaches Mr. Man, *hesitating a bit. Reminds him).*—The banquet . . .

Mr. Man.—I won't go.

Second Self.—Judge Benson. . . .

Mr. Man.—What of it?

Miss Donald (Goes up to Mr. Man *boldly; she pleads).*—Don't go to the banquet.

First Self (Looks at Miss Donald*).*—Well then, no banquet this evening.

Second Self (Steps in between Miss Donald *and* Mr. Man*).*—Remember! Judge Benson's good-will may come in handy.

Third Self.—Don't forget the delicious fare at the banquet!

Second Self.—Just show yourself to the Judge, and then . . .

Third Self.—Just get a taste of the nice things.

Second Self.—Miss Donald will surely come along. *(To* Miss Donald.*)* It's such a magnificent place.

Miss Donald.—I'm afraid. . . .

Mr. Man.—Won't you come? *(*Miss Donald *shakes her head.)*

Mr. Man and his Second Self.—Then we won't go. *(Suddenly.)* Have you made out a check for yourself?

Miss Donald.—No . . . It doesn't matter . . . There might . . .

Mr. Man.—Write out a check. . . . Have you any signed blanks?

Miss Donald.—You might . . .

Mr. Man (Harshly.)—I can still afford to pay you.

(As she opens the check-book, he softens.) Unless you've saved up several years of your wages. . . .

Miss Donald.—The blank is not signed. *(Is about to hand the book to him.)*

Mr. Man.—Here, I'll sign it. *(He goes up close to her, signs the check, hesitates for the moment, then strokes her bobbed hair.)* Let's meet tonight.

Miss Donald (She suddenly raises her hand. Almost plaintively).—Not at the hotel.

Second Self.—The hotel lobby is all right.

First Self.—From there we'll go elsewhere.

Third Self.—Yes. We'll have a good time. . . .

Miss Donald (With uncertainty, pleadingly).—We mustn't be out too late.

Second Self.—Tomorrow's Sunday.

Mr. Man (Gladly).—Tomorrow's Sunday. . . . *(Self-consciously.)* Tomorrow's Sunday . . . and then . . . Monday and Hell all over again. . . .

All the Selves.—Monday's still far off.

Miss Donald.—I wanted to speak to you.

Mr. Man.—To me?

First Self.—This evening.

Mr. Man (In the same tone).—This evening.

(The telephone rings; all grow excited. MISS DONALD *lifts the receiver, while the rest listen eagerly.)*

Miss Donald.—New Realty Company . . . Who? Mr. Martin? Of the Home Builders' Association? *(*MR. MAN *motions to her that he is not in; the* SELVES *step aside.)* Mr. Man? N-n-no. Just left . . . On business . . . When? . . . *(*MR. MAN *motions to her—"no")* I don't know. . . . Perhaps later. . . . A check? For you? Hold the wire, I'll see. *(In a moment.)* No. Probably forgot. . . . No. Don't send anybody. He's out and he might not be back today. . . . 'Twould be useless. . . . As you please. . . . No. . . . I'll tell him about it early Monday morning. . . . I'll make the check right now. . . . Yes, as soon as he signs it. . . . Yes, certainly. . . . He must have forgotten. . . . It has never happened before. . . . After so many years' business with us. . . . I don't know. . . . Part of it, surely. . . . I don't know. . . . If possible. . . . Today? I'm afraid not. . . . Perhaps. . . . You'll have to manage somehow until Monday. Your messenger is already on the way? I'm afraid . . . I'll see. . . . You won't have . . . I'll see. . . . Good-bye. . . .

*(*MR. MAN *and his* SELVES *who have been watching* MISS DONALD'S *face and listening eagerly, almost breathlessly, heave a sigh of relief.)*

Mr. Man.—You're having a fine time of it, eh? Now run along home. . . .

Miss Donald (She smiles in embarrassment).—It isn't one yet.

Mr. Man (Smiling).—Well, well, you can owe me half an hour then.

*(*MISS DONALD *prepares to leave. Martin's* OFFICE GIRL *enters. All become confused.)*

Office Girl.—Mr. Martin sent me.

Miss Donald (Attempting to conceal her embarrassment).—Mr. Man has just come in. I haven't yet had time to tell him. . . . . *(To* MR. MAN.*)* Mr. Martin has sent for a check. *(Before* MR. MAN *has time to answer.)* I told Mr. Martin on the telephone that you would send the check to him on Monday.

Office Girl.—Mr. Martin wishes to have the check now. . . .

Mr. Man (To MISS DONALD, *feigning indifference).*—Will you check up on the bank balance?

Miss Donald (Pretending to examine the check-books).—Monday would be safer. There might be . . .

Office Girl.—Mr. Martin must have a couple of hundred at least. . . .

Miss Donald.—But the bank is closed; what could he do with the check?

Office Girl (Obstinately).—He must have it. . . . He'll cash it somewhere.

Mr. Man (Suddenly).—Let her have one for two hundred. . . . By Monday I'll manage. . . .

Miss Donald (Takes the check-book reluctantly).—Two hundred?

(While she is writing and MR. MAN *is signing the check, the* FIRST SELF *approaches the* OFFICE GIRL *and whispers something in her ear. Both laugh.)*

Miss Donald (To the OFFICE GIRL, *in an angry tone).*—Here you are.

(The girl takes the check, thanks her; girl and the FIRST SELF *exchange glances, smile at each other. Exit* OFFICE GIRL.*)*

Miss Donald (Chagrined).—You should not have given it.

Mr. Man.—What's the difference? One check more or less, it matters little. And he probably needs it badly.

Miss Donald (With uncertainty).—But what good will it do him?

Mr. Man.—By the time the check comes back . . . who can tell?

He With the Sad Smile (Ironically).—Who can tell? Perhaps an inheritance?

Mr. Man (Smilingly).—Yes, that's so. . . . Perhaps an inheritance. . . .

He With the Sad Smile (In the same tone).—Or a lucky stroke at cards. . . .

Mr. Man (Animated, to MISS DONALD *who is ready to leave).*—Do you play cards?

*(*MISS DONALD *shakes her head.)*

First Self (Pretending to bar her way accidentally).—What do you play? *(*MISS DONALD *is embarrassed.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *makes a dash for the* FIRST SELF. MR. MAN *stares at him angrily, too.* FIRST SELF *retreats.)*

Mr. Man.—Tonight at ten. . . .

Second Self (Completing the sentence).—In the lobby of the Majestic. . . .

(Exit MISS DONALD. MR. MAN *stands for a while, lost in thought. He takes the telephone in hand, hesitates, lifts the receiver, calls a number and waits.)*

He With the Sad Smile (Standing near him).—She kept her promise. She did go to her mother's.

Mr. Man (Replaces the receiver. With apathy).—It may be for the best.

All Selves (In unison).—For the best!

Lesser Selves (In unison).—For the best!

Third Self (Suddenly).—Let's have a bite. . . . I want to eat. I'm hungry.

First Self.—Let's have something to eat.

Second Self.—Nothing to do here anyway.

He With the Sad Smile.—Unless you mean to wait for some more creditors.

Mr. Man (Sighs).—More creditors. *(They prepare to leave. The telephone rings. General confusion; the* SELVES *are near the door;* MR. MAN *is in the center of the room.* HE WITH

THE SAD SMILE *who is near the telephone makes a move toward the telephone.)*

All Selves (In fear).—Don't.

Lesser Selves (In fear).—Don't.

Mr. Man (Pale, frightened and abashed, lowers his head. Whispers).—Don't.

(Swiftly, stealthily, on tiptoe, the SELVES *leave; first the greater, then the lesser.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *follows them; his expression is that of contempt.* MR. MAN *leaves the last, also on tiptoe, as if fearing that the one at the other end of the wire might hear him. He remains standing at the door, facing the office. He listens for a while, his face expressing terror. Slowly and carefully he shuts the door. The telephone continues to ring for a long while.)*

ACT II

SCENE I

(Lobby of an up-to-date hotel. Muffled sounds, bustle, footsteps softened by the velvet carpet . . . whispered conversations, guests walking to and fro. The air of the women who move about is peculiarly suggestive and lustful; it evokes restless movements and lingering glances from the men. The gait of the smart bell-hops, waiters and porters, is agile, almost as if they were suspended in thin air. A voice paging someone; the distant sound of opening and shutting elevator doors. . . . A rich glow, yet strangely soft and suggestive.

The movements of this scene are grotesque in every detail: line, form, color, sound, thus suggesting a fantastic carnival.

In the center of the stage (back) and between rows of numbered doors, there is a wide mirrored door leading to the Hall of Mirrors where a banquet for the benefit of a charity organization is being held.

Throughout the scene, faint sounds of a jazz orchestra are heard. The frequently opened door conveys clatter and excitement which are cut off as soon as it closes. LA PAMME, *the acting head of the association, comes out of the banquet hall. He walks arm in arm with* MR. MAN *and the latter's* SECOND SELF. *The* FIRST SELF *walks somewhat apart and thirstily heeds every movement of the women as they pass. At their left is* HE WITH

THE SAD SMILE, *who looks at the clock and yawns. The rest of the* SELVES *follow behind; they are animated. Even* MR. MAN *seems to be in a happier mood than earlier in the day.)*

La Pamme.—What excitement! And the sumptuous food they are serving. This is where you get the regular stuff!

Third Self.—Their black coffee is simply delicious!

La Pamme.—I want a word with you. *(A passing young woman attracts his attention; he nods his head.)* What a stepper! *(At these words they all turn around, even* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE, *to look at the swiftly passing, lightly clothed young woman.)*

Third Self.—They serve ice cream with the black coffee, too.

La Pamme.—Their ice cream is famous!

Third Self.—I shouldn't like to miss the black coffee. I just love their coffee.

La Pamme.—One word. *(To* MR. MAN.*)* We want . . . *(hesitating)* . . . we should like you to set the example. . . . We'll call on you first.

Mr. Man (As if suddenly transformed. He seems to have shrunk and to have lost himself completely. Pleads).—Not this time. This once I want to be out of it. . . .

*(*LA PAMME *makes a gesture indicating his refusal to listen.)*

Mr. Man (Stares harshly at the SELVES*).*—I have no business here. I should never have come.

La Pamme.—That's assuming that we couldn't find our way to your place. Mr. Man's address is certainly not a secret to the world.

Mr. Man (Pleading).—If I entreat you to leave me out of it this once, you ought to, La Pamme. When I say I can't, I can't. If business were not so . . .

Second Self (Picking up the thread).—. . . involved.

Mr. Man.—So involved and in such a mess. . . .

La Pamme.—Yes, yes, I know. . . . The greater the business, the more money required . . . And you've donated much of it, I know; everybody knows that. Why, the Judge spoke of you today. . . .

Second Self (Swelling with pride).—Judge Benson!

Mr. Man.—Yes, he was at my home several times.

La Pamme.—We happened to be talking about donors . . .

just considering what we might expect, you know. . . . And the Judge said to me: 'Just because Man is so generous, we should not ask too much of him.'

Mr. Man (Moved).—Listen. I'll give my share. I'll surely give it.

La Pamme (Pretending not to have heard).—'One thousand,' said the Judge to me, 'is surely ours. And we won't ask him for a cent more than that.'

Second Self (Pleading with MR. MAN*).*—One thousand. . .

Mr. Man (Staring harshly at the SECOND SELF. *In despair to* LA PAMME*).*—I . . . I must not . . . I can't. I haven't any money. . . .

La Pamme (Almost severely, losing patience).—But nothing's to be done. Judge Benson has put your name down for that amount.

All the Selves (To MR. MAN*; whispering).*—Judge Benson!

La Pamme (Regaining control).—It was he who suggested that you be named among the active workers or the drive. Have you seen the list. Do you realize who else is on it?

All the Selves.—We sure did! *(Each of the* SELVES *takes a printed sheet from his pocket and reads.)* Judge John A. Graham; Judge Frank P. Jeffrey; Professor Raymond White; Madame Virginia van Sickling. . . .

Mr. Man.—Enough, enough. I know . . . *(Stops them.)*

La Pamme.—Prestige! Feels good, eh? And the newspapers, too.

All the Selves—The newspapers? Where? When?

Mr. Man.—Which newspapers? *(His voice is low.)*

La Pamme.—Just wait and see! We're boosting you! Have you seen the crowd of reporters we have here tonight? The press is working hand in hand with us. Your picture will appear in the newspapers as that of a distinguished donor. Come to think of it, let's have your picture.

Second Self (Thrusting his hand in a side pocket).—Just happen to have one.

He With the Sad Smile (Softly).—Don't.

Mr. Man (Embarrassed; withdraws SECOND SELF'S *hand).*—Don't.

La Pamme.—Why not? Whatever you're entitled to. . . .

Second Self.—Here, I just happen to have one.

He With the Sad Smile (Severely).—You shouldn't!

Second Self.—But I happen to have it. . . .

Mr. Man (Decisively).—No!

Second Self.—But Mr. La Pamme wants the picture for publicity.

La Pamme.—That's it, certainly.

Second Self (Handing the picture to LA PAMME*).*—And I just happen to have it with me, too.

La Pamme.—Fine! Your name. . . . your picture. . . . That's what we need! *(Stops short as he notices the approach of the* RICH MADAME, *one of the drive-workers, a middle-aged woman. He steps aside, bows deeply and, when she is near enough, introduces* MR. MAN.*)* I have the honor, Madame, to introduce Mr. Man, one of our most generous donors.

(As MADAME *draws near, the* FIRST SELF *pushes forward and finds a place nearest her. All the* SELVES *bow ceremoniously and, in a sing-song manner, in a chorus, they say: "How do you do?" The* FIRST SELF *makes himself more conspicuously agreeable.* MR. MAN *bows his head slightly.)*

Rich Madame.—So delighted! Am I late?

La Pamme.—You've missed the chicken. . . . The Judge has already arrived. But you're just in time as we're about to start the appeal. *(He laughs. All the* SELVES *laugh mechanically while* MR. MAN *has a serious countenance.* LA PAMME *escorts the* RICH MADAME *upstairs. The* SELVES *make as if to follow them but they notice that* MR. MAN *has not moved from the spot and follow his example. To* MR. MAN.*)* You'll be late for the coffee.

Mr. Man (Moves to go, then restrains himself. The SELVES *stop, hesitatingly.)* Why in Heaven's name did I ever come here! Why!

Second Self.—All because of Judge Benson. . . .

Mr. Man (Sternly).—I should never have come!

Second Self.—But it was impossible to refuse!

Mr. Man.—Money! Always money!

Second Self.—There's always a way out. . . .

Mr. Man.—Way out! . . . One way out; a check that will be worthless. The generous donor! Buried to the neck in debts! Even my shirt isn't my own.

Second Self (Points to MR. MAN'S *finger).*—There is still your diamond ring. *(All the* Selves *point their fingers at the ring.)*

Second Self.—What a sensation it will cause!

All the Selves.—What a sensation!

Second Self (With emphasis, as if announcing).—Man offers his diamond ring to the cause! *(He applauds; the* Selves *imitate him.)*

Mr. Man (Confused).—Her ring? Are you mad?

Second Self.—But she's left you—gone to her parents.

Mr. Man (As if fighting off the evil).—No . . . no . . . no . . . I won't go in!

All the Selves.—D'you want to run away?

Mr. Man (In despair, pleading).—I can't. I mustn't. I have no money. . . .

Second Self (Craftily).—No one will force you to contribute. You want to run away? How will it look? What will they say?

All the Selves.—What will they say?

Mr. Man (As if pleading for mercy).—For pity's sake, must I wear myself out in this confounded chase for money! It's like throwing it to the devil, to give it to those idiotic charities!

All the Selves (Surrounding him as if frightened by his words).—Shh . . . shh.

Second Self.—You won't have to give. Find an excuse. . . .

Mr. Man (Flares up).—Excuses be hanged. I haven't any money! That's the best excuse. . . .

Second Self (Soothingly).—But you don't have to broadcast it. That would make it worse.

All the Selves.—That would make it worse! *(With these words the* Second *and* Third Selves *lead* Mr. Man *into the hall. All the* Selves *follow.* He With the Sad Smile *walks behind them. He stops as he reaches the door and does not enter the hall. For a moment he is lost in thought, smiling sadly but, suddenly noticing* Miss Donald *who has come in by the side entrance, he moves to meet her. She walks with some hesitation, but her face lights up as soon as she sees* He With the Sad Smile. *She quickens her pace.)*

He With the Sad Smile (Puts his fingers to his lips).—Shh . . . Shh . . .

Miss Donald (Astonished).—Why, what's the matter?

*He With the Sad Smile (Pointing toward the mirrored *door).*—The Holy Ceremony! Now . . . there!

Miss Donald (Smiling).—What's it all about?

He With the Sad Smile.—That's where the last diamond ring is being sacrificed upon the altar of . . .

Miss Donald.—Generosity!

He With the Sad Smile.—Weakness!

Miss Donald.—He's so good-hearted. I'm so sorry for him. . . .

He With the Sad Smile (Suddenly changed).—Why did you come here?

Miss Donald (Somewhat embarrassed, confused by the suddenness of the question).—Because I . . . I wanted to speak to Mr. Man.

He With the Sad Smile.—That's not true!

Miss Donald (More confused; almost tearfully).—I thought it might be best. I thought he ought to call a meeting of . . .

He With the Sad Smile.—Then why didn't you speak to him at the office? That's the place for . . .

Miss Donald (Interrupts him in a choking voice).—I didn't dare. . . . I couldn't find courage. . . .

He With the Sad Smile.—That's not true! You couldn't resist the temptation . . . the chance of a good time.

Miss Donald.—If you only knew how sorry I feel for . . .

He With the Sad Smile (Suddenly; as harshly as before).—You are in love!

Miss Donald (Smiles coquettishly).—Perhaps. . .

He With the Sad Smile.—I don't believe you.

Miss Donald.—How mean you are!

He With the Sad Smile.—Man is kind. . . .

Miss Donald.—You're jealous.

He With the Sad Smile.—Of Man?

Miss Donald.—Yes, of Man and of his other Selves.

He With the Sad Smile.—The Selves? How I hate them! How overbearing they are!

Miss Donald (Teasing).—You're jealous.

He With the Sad Smile.—If I thought he'd be like this forever, I'd kill him. *(Excitement and applause from the Hall.)* Do you hear? The other Selves have won again. The holy ritual is at its end.

(MR. MAN *and his* SELVES *accompanied by* JUDGE BENSON, LA PAMME, *and the* RICH MADAME, *are seen leaving the Hall of Mirrors. They all speak at once and laugh.)*

Judge Benson.—Ingenious I call it!

*(*FIRST SELF *withdraws from the others and approaches* MISS DONALD.*)*

La Pamme.—What a sensation it caused!

Rich Madame.—Simply grand!

Mr. Man.—I thought . . . times are bad . . . something must be done for the drive, and . . .

Judge Benson.—Ingenious!

La Pamme.—Netted us two thousand dollars!

Rich Madame.—Might have brought us even more. . . .

Second Self.—It was a stroke of genius on the part of His Honor! To name it the lucky ring!

Mr. Man (Sadly to himself).—The lucky ring. Indeed. . . . *(He notices* MISS DONALD. *Becomes embarrassed.)*

La Pamme (To MR. MAN*).*—It was certainly a lucky ring! How quickly we obtained the twenty-five thousand!

*(*MR. MAN *makes as if to bid them farewell.)*

Judge Benson.—Are you coming up to the club? The evening's just started.

Mr. Man (In a quandary; pointing to MISS DONALD*).*—I have an appointment.

Judge Benson.—You lucky devil! One every night. What a sweet one too! Take her along *(They approach* MISS DONALD, *to whom* MR. MAN *introduces the Judge. All bow with exaggerated politeness.)*

Judge Benson.—Miss Donald, we are now about to go to the club to celebrate our phenomenally successful drive. *(Observing that* MISS DONALD *is dissatisfied.)* We have music and dancing and good things to eat. . . . *(To* MR. MAN.*)* Do you dance?

First Self (To MISS DONALD'S *left).*—Why, of course!

Second Self (To her right).—Most certainly!

Mr. Man (As if pleading with MISS DONALD, *who is hesitant about going).*—Please come.

Miss Donald.—I must be home early.

Mr. Man.—We'll leave early.

Judge Benson.—This is Saturday. You can rest tomorrow.

Miss Donald.—Mother will be worried.

Judge Benson.—Now, there's a considerate daughter for you!

Mr. Man and His Selves.—We'll take you home early.

Rich Madame (With exaggerated sweetness).—Do come. *(They all go toward the door, forming a gay procession, with* MR. MAN *and* MISS DONALD *in the center.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *remains behind. He gazes at them for a long time, sighs, and at last follows them reluctantly.)*

SCENE II

(A large room in a first-class hotel. Late at night. A wide brass bed; soft lounges; a desk. Bright, glaring lights.

MR. MAN *and his* SELVES *have just come in, slightly drunk.* MISS DONALD *is at the door, hesitant, as if undecided whether or not to remain.* FIRST SELF *stands near her; the others are scattered throughout the room, merry-making.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *sinks wearily into a soft lounge and sits there for a while with eyes closed.* MR. MAN *is at the telephone, ordering some drinks. When he has finished talking over the telephone, he approaches* MISS DONALD*; he is in a gay mood.)*

Mr. Man (Strokes her face).—Good time, eh? Make yourself at home. Now, don't wear such a poker face. . . . Take your hat off . . . and your little coat. . . . *(Takes her coat off for her.)* There's a dear!

Miss Donald (Laughing; embarrassed).—I must go real soon. . . . You'll take me home, won't you? . . . Mother will be so . . .

Mr. Man.—Wait . . . just wait . . . We'll soon have the real stuff! And then there'll be whoopee!

Miss Donald.—I don't think I'll drink any more. . . . I'm half-drunk already. . . . *(She laughs tipsily.)*

Mr. Man.—But you did have a good time, eh?

Second Self.—And they all fell for her!

Miss Donald (Flattered; laughs. She stretches herself languidly and looks about, admiring everything about her).—This is the first time I've been in a hotel, alone with a . . .

First Self (Very pleased).—The first time!

Second Self.—A first-class hotel!

Miss Donald.—Gorgeous! *(Laughs.)* So strange! *(Laughs.)* So funny. . . .

Second Self (Rubs his hands contentedly).—Fine time, eh? They swarmed about you like bees . . . didn't leave for a moment!

Mr. Man.—Like it here?

Miss Donald (Nods, but suddenly remembers something).—You will take me home soon?

Mr. Man.—Wait . . . We'll soon have something you've never tasted before. . . . Never in your life! . . .

Miss Donald.—I won't drink any more, or I'll get so drunk I'll never be able to get home! . . .

Mr. Man.—It's not strong . . . just liquor and something mighty tasty with it. . . .

Miss Donald.—I thought we were going to talk about . . .

Mr. Man.—Plenty of time for that!

Miss Donald (Enters the room, gazes at the bed, the lounges and the desk).—It's lovely here. . . . Must be nice to sleep here. . . . *(Laughs.)* If my mother knew . . . with you . . . at this hour . . . so late . . . *(Starts.)* You must take me home . . . soon. . . .

Mr. Man (Close to her, in drunken admiration, tries to embrace her. She slips away lightly and playfully.)

Miss Donald (Wagging her finger at him).—You promised!

Mr. Man (For the moment ashamed of himself).—Why, of course, why I didn't mean a thing. . . .

(A knock at the door; Miss Donald *starts; the* Selves *laugh at her.)*

Why it's the bell-hop bringing the great stuff . . .

*(*Mr. Man *opens the door. A bell-hop and a waiter bring in a tray full of liquor and sweets. They put up a square folding table, cover it with a tablecloth, arrange the napkins, the sweets and the liquor.* Mr. Man *pays them; they thank him and leave.* Mr. Man *locks the door.* Miss Donald *is amused at the proceedings, as if she were unable to believe her own eyes. At the same time her face expresses admiration and a host of emotions that she is experiencing inwardly; the extravagance impresses her especially.)*

(Busying himself at the table, pouring the liquor; he seems very satisfied.) That's the stuff. . . . That's it. . . . Now we can sit down to drink. . . . *(Looks about for chairs.)* Wait, wait . . . everything will be all right. . . . *(One of the*

SELVES *helps him carry the table up to the bed, so that the bed may be used as one seat. The other* SELVES *push the armchairs toward the table.* MISS DONALD *is still standing in an attitude expressing mingled fear and wonder.* MR. MAN *takes her hands.)* Come now dear, sit down! . . .

Miss Donald (Not moving).—How extravagant you are!

Mr. Man.—That's in your honor. . . .

Miss Donald (Almost in despair and disappointed).—But I did want to talk to you!

Mr. Man.—Come now, let's sit down first. . . . Let's have something to eat . . . after that we can talk. . . . *(Leading her to the table)* but let's not talk shop. . . .

Miss Donald.—But that's just what I'm here for!

Mr. Man.—Oh, no! You can say anything you wish, but don't talk about business! . . .

Miss Donald.—But that was why I came here tonight. . . . I wanted to talk to you about the report . . . the financial report. . . .

Mr. Man.—I know the state I'm in! *(Pleading.)* Please, please don't talk business with me tonight. . . . There's time enough Monday . . . Monday . . . Not tonight! Tonight's a holiday! Let's celebrate!

(While MR. MAN *is talking to her rapidly and a bit excitedly,* MISS DONALD'*s resistance weakens more and more. She seats herself at* MR. MAN'S *left, upon the bed, where it is more comfortable than in the low armchairs. At her right the* FIRST SELF *is seated. The other* SELVES *are either reclining in the armchairs or have seated themselves on the arms of the chairs.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *sits facing* MISS DONALD. MR. MAN *offers her a glass of wine; takes one for himself; the rest follow suit.)*

Miss Donald (Restless).—I don't want to drink! I shouldn't! I must go home!

Mr. Man—Just one! A toast to you. . . . *(She takes the glass.* MR. MAN *clinks his glass with hers.)* Here's to the one who has borne all my troubles!

(All the SELVES *clink their glasses with hers and drink.)*

First Self.—Here is to my discovery! How blind I was not to notice you before.

Second Self.—Here's to your great success at the club this evening!

Third Self.—Here's to more such parties! May there be many more.

First Self.—Here's to all good things!

He With the Sad Smile.—Here's to your good intentions!

Miss Donald (Moved, to Mr. Man*).*—Here's to your generosity! *(All drink merrily.)* How nice . . . Not at all strong! . . . And so sweet! . . .

Second Self.—Benedictine, that's what it is. . . .

*(*Third Self *fills the glasses once more; drinks without waiting for the others. The* First Self *does likewise.)*

Mr. Man (Fills the glasses. Entreats Miss Donald*).*—Take another. . . . Don't be afraid!

Miss Donald.—I'll get drunk!

Mr. Man.—Oh, come, come. . . . You'll only feel gayer!

Miss Donald.—I'll get home to mother dead drunk! *(She laughs and drinks.)*

First Self.—We won't take you home tipsy. . . .

Mr. Man.—We'll stay here until we're real sober. . . .

Miss Donald (Admiring Mr. Man. *She talks tipsily).*—You know . . . you're so good . . . and so extravagant!

Mr. Man.—That's what being good is—extravagance!

Miss Donald (Musing. In a drunken state).—If you were to earn all that money again . . .

Mr. Man.—Don't say earn. . . . One never earns millions. . . . One makes millions. . . .

Miss Donald.—Well, then if you made all that money again, would you be as reckless as you have been?

Mr. Man.—No! They say money likes to be handled with care! Money! Money has its own whims! It's own laws! . . . I suppose in time I would have obeyed those laws, too!

Miss Donald.—And now? Do you know the value of money now?

Mr. Man.—No.

Miss Donald.—I'd simply pass out, if I were to lose so much money!

Mr. Man.—How strange! Usually people die when the heart stops. But there are those who die as soon as the money stops.

Miss Donald.—You should be rich. . . .

Mr. Man.—No, thank you! . . . I've only just gotten rid of it.

Miss Donald.—It didn't take you very long, eh?

Mr. Man.—Why? Five years is a long time!

Miss Donald.—Oh, yes! *(Laughs.)*

(Musing.) Well, anyhow it's better to have money . . .

He With the Sad Smile.—No!

Mr. Man.—Worse!

Miss Donald (Laughing).—Now, if you didn't have the money, how could you ever buy all these good things? *(She points to the table.)*

He With the Sad Smile.—But these are bad things, not good.

Miss Donald.—Then why do you indulge?

Mr. Man.—Why not, while I have the money. *(They both laugh.* Mr. Man *suddenly embraces and kisses her.)*

Miss Donald (Quietly, without much ado).—Please don't.

Mr. Man (In the same tone).—Why not?

Miss Donald.—Because I'm not drunk enough yet.

Mr. Man.—Why don't you drink then? *(Both laugh. He pours two glasses of wine.)* Drink!

Miss Donald.—Why get drunk?

Mr. Man.—Now, you just said that you weren't drunk enough.

Miss Donald.—And what good will it do you if I kiss you when I'm drunk?

Mr. Man.—And what good will it do me if you kiss me when you're sober?

Miss Donald.—Well, I won't kiss you when I'm sober.

Mr. Man.—You won't kiss anybody when you're sober. . . .

Miss Donald (Insulted).—That's not true! If I were in love. . . .

Mr. Man.—Just it! That's when you're drunk! . . .

Miss Donald.—There's a difference when one is in love.

Mr. Man.—And don't you love me at all? *(Disappointed.)* And I thought . . .

Miss Donald (Embarrassed).—You have such a beautiful wife!

Mr. Man.—She's left me. . . . She doesn't care for me any more. . . .

Miss Donald.—That isn't true. . . . It's because you stay out all night; night after night. . . .

Mr. Man (Lowers his eyes).—That's true too. . . .

Miss Donald.—You love her, don't you?

Mr. Man (Lowers his head).—Yes.

Miss Donald (Looks at him with admiration. Suddenly she puts her arms around him and kisses him. First Self *looks up with thirsty, intoxicated eyes.)*

Mr. Man (Animated. Clinks his glass with hers).—Drink! Let's get drunk! . . .

(They all drink. The merriment grows. The Lesser Selves, *who have become drunk long before, begin to sing; they sway as they sing.* First Self *leads in the song, his voice being louder than the rest.)*

Without the ring
Or wedding vow!
Here is the wine
So drink, so drink!
You are man, and I am your mate . . .
Put out the light,
My body glows and burns tonight!

I know no bounds.
I know no claim.
You are steel,
And I am the flame.
I am the flame that softens steel.
Steel longs for forge, for hammer peal.
You are the smith and I'm the keel.

Your heart throbs now
Beneath my hand.
The spokes am I;
You are the band.
Oh metal rim about the spokes,
Let glimmer change the numbered strokes
Within the gleaming, fiery wheel.

Miss Donald (Drunk. Applauds).—Sing it again! I'll join you.

(They all sing it again. Toward the end of the song the Lesser Selves *are quiet; one by one they fall asleep.* Mr. Man *leaves the table, drunk and nervous;* He With the Sad Smile *approaches him and attempts to whisper something into* Mr. Man's *ear, but* Mr. Man *does not listen. They stop singing.*

MISS DONALD *is drunk.* FIRST SELF *embraces her and whispers something into her ear; both laugh.* MR. MAN *laughs quietly.)*

He With the Sad Smile (To MR. MAN; *somewhat with hostility).*—You promised to take her home early. You promised . . .

Mr. Man.—I can't take her home as she is.

He With the Sad Smile.—You got her drunk.

Mr. Man.—Let me alone! *(Angrily.)* Hang it all, she's not a baby!

He With the Sad Smile.—And if she were a baby, would you spare her?

Mr. Man.—No concern of yours, is it?

He With the Sad Smile.—Would she have stayed here with you of her own free will?

Mr. Man.—She is here of her own free will!

He With the Sad Smile.—You deliberately made her drunk.

Mr. Man.—That's as much her doing as mine!

He With the Sad Smile.—She put it clearly that she would never kiss you unless she were drunk. . . .

Mr. Man (Pushes him off).—Shut up! Nobody asked your opinion.

He With the Sad Smile.—You didn't ask, but I must tell you just the same . . . you mean to take advantage of her now that she is drunk!

*(*MR. MAN *shoves him off again.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *goes up to* FIRST SELF; *his air is that of deliberateness.)*

Miss Donald (Intoxicated; barely articulating).—I know. . . . I . . . I'm drunk . . . that's why you speak to me like that. . . . *(Laughs.)*

He With the Sad Smile (To FIRST SELF*).*—You leave her alone!

First Self (Pushes him away avoiding his glance).—Stay out of this!

He With the Sad Smile.—Let her alone, I say! *(Tries to tear him away.)*

First Self (Gets up furiously).—Let go, damn you!

He With the Sad Smile.—Let go of her, I say!

First Self (Strikes him in the face. They begin to fight. MR. MAN *runs over; separates them; pushes them roughly in opposite directions.* MISS DONALD *tries to rise, but can't.* MR.

MAN *sits down beside her; embraces her and speaks to her quietly.)*

Mr. Man.—Shall I take you home?

Miss Donald (Drunk).—Yes. . . .

Mr. Man.—Do you know that you are drunk?

Miss Donald.—Yes.

Mr. Man.—Won't your mother mind seeing you in such a state?

Miss Donald.—My . . . my . . . mo-ther . . . will . . . just . . . die . . . if . . . she'll see . . . me . . . drunk. . . .

Mr. Man.—Why not lie down for a while? I'll take you home after you sober up a bit.

Miss Donald.—M-Mother'll . . . not . . . sleep . . . a wink . . . 'til I . . . get . . . home. . . . *(Laughs.)*

Mr. Man (Peeved).—You shouldn't have come without your mother's knowledge.

Miss Donald.—I only . . . wanted to . . . tell you . . . that . . . I wanted . . . to tell you . . . that . . . that . . .

Mr. Man (Impatient).—You should never have come here. You could have spoken to me in the office.

Miss Donald.—In the office you're my boss. . . .

Mr. Man (Laughs).—And what am I here?

Miss Donald.—Here you are . . . Here you're such a dear. . . .

*(*MR. MAN *embraces her passionately.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *sinks into an armchair; lowers his head.* FIRST SELF, *who is seated in another armchair, near the electric-button, presses it. Darkness.* MISS DONALD'S *laughing and struggling voice is heard.)*

Miss Donald.—Just because I'm drunk . . . you shouldn't. . . . Ho . . . Ho . . . Ho . . . Just because . . . I'm drunk . . . Mister Man! Man!

ACT III

SCENE I

*(*MR. MAN'S *home. The library, rich and modern. The furnishings are few, but costly. Paintings on the wall; the bookshelves are full; a Persian divan; floor-cushions; floor-lamps.*

The style is not consistent, although the tendency is modernistic.

Late Monday morning. The clock over the book-case indicates ten. MR. MAN *paces the room nervously; grasps his head; puts his hands to his temples from time to time. In the corners of the room, on the divan, on the cushions and on the rug, the* SELVES *are sprawled. They seem to be dozing. The* FIRST SELF *seems to have dozed off while sitting; his head is resting upon his chest, his hands hang limp as if he were dead, and his legs, tightly encased in their trousers, seem lifeless. The* SECOND SELF *keeps opening and closing his eyes. He casts suspicious glances at* MR. MAN *as he lazily watches the latter pace nervously to and fro. The* THIRD SELF *opens his eyes and mutters: "I'm hungry" each time* MR. MAN *passes him then shuts his eyes again, realizing that* MR. MAN *has ignored him. The* FOURTH SELF, *with a cigarette constantly in his mouth, is the only* SELF *that is thoroughly awake and watchful. As soon as* MR. MAN *has finished a cigarette, the* FOURTH SELF *offers him another, which* MR. MAN *takes mechanically and lights.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *is seated at a table; his head is in his hands as he stares in front of him as if in a day-dream. The* LESSER SELVES *are asleep.)*

Mr. Man (At the telephone. Calls a number and waits. No answer.) Miss Donald isn't there; the office is closed. *(Hangs up receiver.)* That telephone must be ringing constantly. Perhaps I ought to go. . . . *(The* SECOND SELF *raises his head suspiciously as if awaiting something.)* But what would I do there? *(The* SECOND SELF *lowers his head.* MR. MAN *goes to the telephone once more and calls a number.)* Hello. This is Mr. Man again. Not in? Please tell Mr. MacLaughlin to telephone me at my home. . . . No, I won't be there. At my home. As soon as he gets in. *(Replaces the receiver.)*

(Continues his pacing; returns to the telephone, hesitates for a moment, calls a number and waits with nervous anxiety.) Hello. May I speak to Mrs. Man? What's that? Not in? Can you tell me . . . Hello . . . Hello . . . *(Hangs up the receiver slowly.)*

He With the Sad Smile (Playfully).—War!

Mr. Man (Paces the room again. Repeats, almost unaware of himself).—War! *(Stops in front of* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE.*)* I wonder whether Miss Donald has a telephone . . . ! *(Looking through the telephone directory.)* That must be it!

(Calls the number, reading it from the book.) Hello. May I please talk to Miss Donald? No; Miss Donald. Sick?

He With the Sad Smile (Scoffing).—That's her.

Mr. Man (At the telephone).—Sick in bed?

He With the Sad Smile.—Ask her mother . . . what's the matter with her?

Mr. Man (Undecided. Hesitating).—Can I come to see her? Hello . . . Hello . . . Hello . . . *(Replaces the receiver distractedly. Pacing the room, lost in thought.)* I'll have to go over and see her. *(*SECOND SELF *raises his head suspiciously.)* Not unless . . .

He With the Sad Smile.—Not unless she's kept it from her mother. *(The telephone rings.* MR. MAN *starts as if frightened. He grasps the receiver. All the* SELVES *raise their heads except the* FIRST SELF.*)*

Mr. Man.—Hello; MacLaughlin? I called you several times. Yes. Same thing. . . . Yes. . . . Call a meeting of the creditors. No! The only thing to be done. No. Sorry, that's the best way out. I'll go to work. *(The* SELVES *move restlessly.)* Been through enough. No. Let them take everything. Yes, my home too . . . unless . . . my wife may want . . . Oh, I'm not insane. I won't safeguard anything. No! No! I tell you, no! Oh, I'm not worrying about them. I'm thinking of myself. I'm tired of it all. The auditor's accounts are ready. Yes . . . not worth a cent. Bah, shanties! Some day? Maybe. Let 'em keep them. Let them get rich. No, I don't want to get rich. No, never! Let them grow rich. Let them have everything. *(Embarrassed.)* Will I have to be there? What? Better? If I could only avoid it! Yes, certainly. Well, if I must, I must. Shall I bring you all the records? Today? Yes, the office is closed. Miss Donald's sick . . . What, I? No. What would I do there? I'll hand you the accounts. The rest . . . Let 'em come and let 'em take everything. Let them think whatever they please. . . . I'll bring them myself. Yes, she's sick. So soon? Tomorrow? Miss Donald? But she's not well. But you see she's sick. Make it the day after tomorrow. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. *(The doorbell rings. The* SELVES *stare at* MR. MAN *restlessly and questioningly.)* All right. Good-bye. I'll bring those to you later. Don't know much about figures . . . never bothered with the accounts. . . . *(The bell continues to ring, this time more persistently.* MR. MAN *is nervous.)* Who's that?

(In the mouth-piece.) Oh, nothing! Not you. Somebody's ringing the door-bell. O.K. See you later. Good-bye.

*(*MR. MAN *replaces the receiver, runs to answer the door-bell. The bell continues to ring persistently. The* SELVES *are huddled in their corners, waiting with anxiety and suspicion.* MR. MAN *enters, followed by the* PUNY CREDITOR, *a short fellow who walks with slow and careful steps as if he were in fear of treading upon some obstacle. His face expresses smugness, irony, and lack of confidence in others, as if he were saying: "Well you're cornered, man!" The* SELVES *retreat further into their corners, so that they can hardly be seen.* MR. MAN *assumes a comfortable pose, leaning upon something; and thus, in this attitude of feigned ease, he hides his nervousness and embarrassment.* MR. MAN *points to a chair.)*

Mr. Man.—Won't you sit down?

Puny Creditor.—No, thank you, I don't care to sit. I haven't the time. Today is Monday. Monday morning . . . and not Sunday. I didn't come to sit. I've been there . . . to your office, this morning. It's closed. . . .

Mr. Man.—My secretary is sick.

Puny Creditor.—Is that so? So she's sick. And you? How come you're not sick? I just knew I'd find you here. I made up my mind to stick it out until someone'd open the door for me. I'd have stood here all day long. Can't put one over on me. No . . . no!

Mr. Man (Quietly).—I wasn't putting anything over on anybody. I was just answering the telephone. . . .

Puny Creditor.—Is that so? So you were answering the telephone, were you? *(Ironically, as if* MR. MAN *had not convinced him.)* So that's why you let me ring so long. And why don't you pay your bills, may I ask?

Mr. Man (Controlling himself . . . quietly).—My lawyer will. . . .

Puny Creditor (Flares up. Jumps about while he shouts).—To Hell with your lawyer! I didn't do business with him. I did business with you! I gave you my money and not your lawyer!

Mr. Man.—Business was not . . .

Puny Creditor.—To Hell with your business! I'm not concerned about your business. I want a check. That's what I'm here for!

Mr. Man.—There'll be a meeting at my lawyer's in two days. All the . . .

Puny Creditor.—I don't want to wait. I'm right here now! And I want my check right now. In two days! You can't string me. You can't hand me that line. In two days! In two days there won't be anyone to come to.

Mr. Man.—I'm not going to run away, and you're not the only creditor I have . . .

Puny Creditor.—Thank you! Now that I have company I'm happy. I'm not the only one! What the Hell do I want to know about the others. I want a check!

Mr. Man.—Every creditor will get an even share at the settlement.

Puny Creditor (Leaps up as if stung. Shrieks).—What! No sir! Thank you for your settlements. I want all my money!

Mr. Man (Losing his temper a bit).—I can't do a thing without my lawyer. And please don't yell at me like that.

Puny Creditor (Overcome by MR. MAN'S *sudden severity).* —What do you mean? . . .

(The telephone rings; in his excitement the PUNY CREDITOR *runs to answer it.)*

Mr. Man (Severe. Stops him).—This is still my home. Sit down, if you will. *(Answers telephone.)* Hello. Who? What? A piano company? No . . . No . . . No . . . *(Nervous.)* No . . . I don't want any. *(He replaces the receiver. Remains seated at the telephone and smiles sadly. To the creditor who, in the meantime, has been appraising everything in the room,* MR. MAN *speaks with feigned gaiety.)* Do you by any chance want to buy a piano? No payments the first year.

Puny Creditor.—Hell of a crust! Cracking jokes now! My heart is bleeding and he has the nerve to wisecrack. Robbed others . . .

Mr. Man (Insulted).—What do you mean?

Puny Creditor.—You heard me the first time.

Mr. Man (Attacking him with his fists).—Get out of here!

Puny Creditor (Stubbornly; with determination).—It's my money! The sweat of my brow! My blood! Beat me if you will . . . beat me . . . beat me!

Mr. Man (Spits).—Pfoo! After all the money you've cleaned up on me! Aren't you ashamed to stand there and say those things?

Puny Creditor.—So you expect me to give it back to you, eh? Like Hell I will! I won't leave this place without the check!

Mr. Man (Walks calmly up to CREDITOR, *takes hold of his lapels).*—Will you get out of here?

Puny Creditor (Frightened).—Help! Help! Murder! *(Tears himself away and runs up to the door.)* I'll get even with you for this! You'll pay for all this! First you rob me and then you assault me! *(Leaves the house shouting.)* Thief! Murderer!

Mr. Man (Heaves a sigh; upset, he throws himself into an armchair.)

He With the Sad Smile.—And such vermin have money!

Mr. Man.—It is vermin that have it!

He With the Sad Smile.—And why? What do they need it for?

Mr. Man.—They have it because they don't need it.

He With the Sad Smile.—They don't need it because they have it.

Mr. Man.—No, that's not it. They have it because they don't need it. *(The telephone rings.)* Hello. Who? What's that? *(His face becomes grave.)* My note? Oh yes, in a few days. Who? The vice-president? All right. *(Pauses.)* Hello! Yes, I know. I wanted to come in. Haven't been well the last few days. Yes, yes, thank you. . . . Yes, the doctor's been here. O, nothing serious, a slight cold. . . . No, no, thank you. Renew your note? Yes, yes, surely. . . . Thank you. That's certainly nice of you. . . . My office? Yes, my secretary is ill too. In a few days . . . I'll certainly be there in a few days. Make it the day after . . . yes, that'll do. . . . *(*MR. MAN'S *wife enters; all the* SELVES *are stunned, confused.* MR. MAN, *too, lowers his head in embarrassment, at a loss. Can't find words.)* What? What was that? Yes . . . yes . . . Good-bye. *(Replaces the receiver.* FIRST SELF *wakes up.)*

Mrs. Man (She is very beautiful and haughty. She is ill at ease and does not look directly at MR. MAN *as she speaks to him).*—I came for some of my things. I want to pack them and send them to mother's. I never expected to find you here . . . at this time of the day.

Mr. Man (Firmly. Goes up to her).—Sit down. I want to talk to you.

He With the Sad Smile.—Inviting trouble again!

Mrs. Man (Turns away abruptly).—I don't want to listen. I've heard enough. *(Turns toward the door.)*

Mr. Man (Barring her way).—I am not excusing myself. I just want to tell you that . . .

Mrs. Man.—Let me pass! . . . Let me pass! *(Almost hysterically.)* Let me go I say!

Mr. Man (In despair).—I just want to tell you that . . .

Mrs. Man (Stops her ears).—I don't want to listen. Let me out of here! I'll come and get my things some other time. You can have my things! Just let me get out of here!

Mr. Man (Pleadingly).—Ellen, please! Ellen . . . *(Steps aside.)* Wait, I'll go away. You can take your things now. You can have the whole house.

Mrs. Man (In the doorway).—I don't want your house. I don't want your things. . . .

Mr. Man.—I would rather you'd take them before the creditors do.

Mrs. Man.—Let them take whatever they want. Why should I care? *(Turns back.)* All I want is my ring. You can have everything else.

Mr. Man (Pleased that she has turned back).—Your ring? *(Suddenly feels his finger and remembers. Turns pale; his arms and head droop; he is motionless.)*

Mrs. Man (She does not seem to understand; speaks more calmly).—I have nothing against you. . . . I'm not asking anything of you. You don't owe me anything. *(Walking into the room, not looking at* MR. MAN.*)*

Mr. Man (Hoping for something; turning toward her).—Ellen, listen. Please listen to me, Ellen . . .

Mrs. Man (Flaring up again).—I don't want to listen. I refuse to hear a thing! *(Approaches him in a burst of anger.)* Give me that ring! *(He remains motionless.)* My ring! The diamond! You wore it! *(He spreads his hands, indicating that the ring is gone; there is a confession of guilt and despair in his gesture. She suddenly begins to understand. For a moment she is as if stunned; speechless with fury.)* You don't mean to say you haven't got my ring? Who did you give that ring to? Answer! How did you dare give that ring to anyone? *(She does not seem to know what to do nor what to say, in her excitement and rage. Suddenly she confronts him, stamping her foot.)* Give me that ring, will you? *(Seeing his pale face, she* *breaks down.)* Give me that ring. . . . Give me that ring. . . . *(Bursts into tears; runs out of the room.* MR. MAN *makes a step toward her; stops; glances at the* SELVES *with the air of sudden determination. Each of the* SELVES *turns his head away.* MR. MAN *sighs. His eyes meet those of* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE. *For a long while their glances remain fixed.)*

SCENE II

(Consultation room at the lawyer's, where the CREDITORS' *meeting is to be held. The room is of usual size; there are low book shelves around the walls, stacked with books and papers; in the center of the room is a long table with chairs surrounding it.*

The CREDITORS *have not arrived yet.* MISS DONALD *is huddled in a corner, bent, pale, anxious, as if it were she, and not* MR. MAN, *who was about to meet the ordeal, and face the* CREDITORS.

MR. MAN *and his* SELVES *enter the room;* MR. MAN *and* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *are at the head; the others walk behind them with timid and slow steps; they seem relieved when they notice that the* CREDITORS *have not arrived. For a moment they remain in the doorway,* MISS DONALD *jumps to her feet as* MR. MAN *enters.)*

Second Self.—No one here? *(Puts his hand to his heart.)* My, how my heart is beating!

Third Self.—Perhaps they won't come, either?

Mr. Man.—I'd rather they did come. The sooner it's over with, the better! *(He notices* MISS DONALD, *steps back in confusion. All of the* SELVES, *not knowing what it's all about, grow frightened and step back, too.* MR. MAN *and* MISS DONALD *approach each other simultaneously.* MR. MAN, *in his surprise, offers his hand to her; this is the first time that* MR. MAN *greets her in this fashion, since they have known each other, and she, taken by surprise, and embarrassed, fails to see the extended hand.* MR. MAN *drops his hand in embarrassment; at the same time the* SELVES, *having noticed* MISS DONALD, *rush joyfully up to her; but when* MR. MAN *drops his hand, they stop short and lower their heads.)*

Mr. Man (Unable to restrain his surprise and his joy).—You here? How did you . . . When did you . . . ?

Miss Donald (With lowered eyes).—Your lawyer telephoned me yesterday. There were certain figures he didn't understand.

Mr. Man.—But he told me that the auditor would attend to it.

Miss Donald.—The auditor was there too. *(Somewhat apologetic.)* I really don't know. He asked me and I came. *(Her voice is choked with tears.)*

Mr. Man.—Oh, on the contrary, I'm so thankful to you! . . . I mean that . . . that you were . . . you were ill. . . . *(Wants to say something else, but loses himself.)* I . . . I telephoned you on Monday.

Miss Donald.—I couldn't come to the office on Monday because I was . . .

Mr. Man (In helpless embarrassment).—Oh, no, no! I didn't telephone because of that . . . on the contrary . . . I . . . Did your mother tell you I phoned?

Miss Donald.—She said somebody called.

MacLaughlin (Opens the door as if in a hurry, peeps in to see whether anyone has come; upon seeing Mr. Man *he goes up to him and clasps his hand.)*

Mr. Man (Hurries to introduce them).—Miss Donald . . . Mr. . . .

MacLaughlin.—I've already had the pleasure, thank you. Miss Donald and I spent some time together right here. Didn't we, Miss Donald?

*(*Miss Donald *nods her head and smiles in embarrassment.)*

(To Mr. Man*).*—You're a bit early. They'll all be here pretty soon. Everybody will be here. Now, don't worry; everything will turn out all right. *(At these words* Mr. Man *and his* Selves *seem to gain new life.)*

MacLaughlin.—There's nothing to fear. You haven't robbed anyone. Your books prove that you are worth over a quarter of a million. Your liabilities are hardly more than two hundred thousand. Am I right, Miss Donald? *(*Miss Donald *nods.* Mr. Man *attempts to say something, but his lawyer interrupts him.)* Now, the fact that your houses on . . . whatever that street's called . . . Dawson Street . . . the fact that those houses have little value at present, is a mere accident. It's not your fault that the value of property in that vicinity fell; that the investment was a failure. Your books prove clearly that you've invested one hundred thousand dollars in that property. Isn't that so, Miss Donald? *(*Miss Donald *nods.* Mr. Man *attempts to say something, but his lawyer interrupts him again.)* The bank happens to be your greatest creditor. Thirty-eight thousand. Right, Miss Donald?

Miss Donald.—Yes, ten thousand were due last Saturday.

MacLaughlin.—Right. Right. Well, I've seen the vice-president of the bank today, and everything is arranged. The bank is very much interested. You understand? The bank will take all that real estate and make a go of it. . . . That's simple enough. And as long as the bank protects our interests, we will have nothing to worry about! . . . *(Winks at* Mr. Man *knowingly.)*

Mr. Man.—But what if the other creditors object?

MacLaughlin.—Why should they? Now let me explain; this proposed arrangement with the bank is in their favor, decidedly in their favor! *(Winks again.)* In time they'll all be . . .

MacLaughlin's Secretary (At the door).—Telephone for you, Mr. MacLaughlin.

MacLaughlin (To Mr. Man*).*—You don't have to be present at the meeting.

(All the Selves *are overjoyed.)*

Mr. Man.—And Miss Donald?

MacLaughlin.—Neither of you. You'd better go into my office; should you be wanted, I'll call you. *(Rubs his hand in proud delight. Grasps* Mr. Man *and* Miss Donald *by the shoulders and pushes them forward good-naturedly. The* Selves *run after* Mr. Man *and* Miss Donald, *happy and relieved. For a moment the room remains vacant. Voices are heard; enter the* First *and* Second Creditors.*)*

First Creditor.—This must be the place.

Second Creditor.—Let's ask the girl in the office.

First Creditor.—What's the use of asking? Can't you see that it must be here? *(They come into the room; look about.)*

First Creditor (Takes a chair almost at the head of the table; sits down. Nobody here yet.)

Second Creditor.—If they were in such a fine fix, if they had as much to lose as we, they'd hurry up and come quick! I'll say they would!

First Creditor.—They say the bank's out o' luck too . . . stuck for a nice few thousand. . . .

Second Creditor.—I should worry about the bank!

First Creditor.—You bet! . . . Let them do their own worrying.

Second Creditor.—I wonder what stand the bank will take?

First Creditor.—Whatever they do, they won't lose.

Second Creditor.—We can't go wrong by following them.

First Creditor.—That's just what I've been saying; we've got to hang on to the bank!

Second Creditor.—That's what I say. I say that . . .

(The CREDITORS *enter. They are all tall and thin, with pale faces; they wear hard collars and black alpaca coats. There are eight of them. They all talk at once, greet one another. The following dialogue takes place between two of them.)*

—Lot's of money?

—Plenty!

—Cash?

—Why? And what's the matter with merchandise? Isn't merchandise money?

—Did you do business with him for a long time?

—Long . . . Short . . . What's the difference?

—You had a chance to make some money on him.

—Must I give it back to him now?

—Like Hell; how do you stand?

—I'm in with plenty!

—*(Content.)* See?

—*(Irritated.)* What's there to see?

—I mean.

—Mean what?

—Can't be too smart.

—You can see for yourself! *(He points to the rest of the* CREDITORS.*)* Swell crowd, eh?

—*(Glad.)* And more!

—That so?

—You bet your sweet life!

—What do you know?

—Plenty of suckers!

—The bank is stuck with a fortune!

—That's good!

—Much better for us!

—That's what I say!

(Two more CREDITORS *carry on a dialogue.)*

—Is that all?

—What an ass!

—With such credit! He could have come through with flying colors.

—And stowed away a nice pile for himself.

—Dawson Street ruined him.

—No brains!

—Are you stuck for much?

—Caught myself in time!

—What luck!

—Luck? Brains!

—Bunk!

(Two others carry on a dialogue.)

—Jail, by Jove!

—I'm with you!

—I've only been doing business with him for a short while.

—If a guy wants to get away with . . .

—He ought to know whom he's dealing with!

—That's just it!

—To think he picked on us!

—Ass! Spoiled his good name by handing out worthless checks!

—I won't let that guy get away with it!

—Wait, we'll see what is to be done.

—Nothing to wait for. . . . A returned check is as good as gold.

—But what if there are no funds? What can you do to him?

—What do I care? I can jail him!

—And you're really goin' to?

—As true as I live!

—Quit the talk!

(Enter MACLAUGHLIN *and the vice-president of the bank. The noise subsides; they sit down. For a moment all is silent. Some of them seem to know the vice-president and take pride in letting the others know it, through various signs with their eyes, with their elbows. The respect for the bank official becomes mingled with awe.)*

MacLaughlin (Official and authoritative, in a calm tone *that brooks no contradiction).*—Gentlemen! I have asked you to meet here, in order that we may discuss the financial situation of my client, Mr. Man, not so much in the interests of Mr. Man, as in your own interests.

Second Creditor.—Why isn't he here himself?

Third Creditor.—What's he hiding for? Why can't he show up?

MacLaughlin.—Gentlemen, Gentlemen. Just be patient. Should it be necessary for my client to appear before you, I assure you he will do so. I want you to understand, that my client has not and will not deprive you of a single cent of your money.

A Creditor.—I should say he won't!

MacLaughlin (Ignoring him).—I have before me the report of the certified public accountant, who has thoroughly examined these books. Each of the gentlemen present is invited to examine the report. And you will convince yourself, my friends, that Mr. Man is worth tens of thousands more than what he owes. . . .

A Creditor.—Why are we here then?

Second Creditor.—You're right, by Jove. Give us the cash and send us home!

(Laughter.)

MacLaughlin (Ignoring the remarks).—It is obvious, my friends, that no business can be carried on without credit.

A Creditor.—Sure enough! That's why he used our money.

(Laughter.)

MacLaughlin (Ignoring the remark).—How would the banks get along, if all business were carried on, on a cash basis? *(Turns in the direction of the* BANKER *who nods in approbation and smiles. The rest smile, too.* MACLAUGHLIN *begins to feel more sure of himself.)* If I am not mistaken, I believe our Banker is well acquainted with Mr. Man's real estate transactions. Otherwise, I take it the bank would never have lent him so much money . . . and let me emphasize this, gentlemen; the bank is the greatest of Mr. Man's creditors. *(There is a movement of contentment and confidence among the creditors.)* It's only right, therefore, that I give to the vice-president of the bank the first word in this matter.

(The CREDITORS *begin to feel more secure and pay exaggerated attention to the* BANKER. *The latter remains seated*

throughout his speech; he speaks calmly and slowly, as if with great deliberation.)

Banker.—Gentlemen! I have very carefully examined the reports and the accounts of our mutual friend, Mr. Man, and I am convinced of his honesty. His present position as any financial expert could easily see, is due to an unforeseen catastrophe; that is the Dawson Street failure.

A Creditor (To another).—Well, what did I tell you?

All.—Sh! . . . sh!

Banker.—Our friend, Mr. Man, is willing to put at our disposal all his property,—his real estate, his car, and even his domestic articles which, according to the law belong to his wife. . . . *(*MACLAUGHLIN *confirms this with a nod of the head. The* CREDITORS *are moved; they have become full of sympathy and admiration.)* It is within our interests to grant Mr. Man, an opportunity to re-establish a firm foothold . . . if necessary, we should even help him financially, see him through this little crisis. It is only in this manner that we shall insure every cent that Mr. Man owes us! There is every prospect that in the future we shall do millions of dollars worth of business with our friend, as we have been doing in the past. . . . But should we make use of our power, and we do have the power to break him, we, and only we, would be the losers. . . . Do you not think, gentlemen, that it is most proper for us to act with sympathy and with consideration for a fellow business man? *(Movement and chatter among the* CREDITORS*; they seem to be moved with sympathy and understanding. The* BANKER *signifies that he has not finished; the noise subsides; he continues.)* I am ready to accept any plan you may decide on in this matter, but with my experience in similar situations, I would advise you to appoint a committee to see this matter through. *(Applause.)*

MacLaughlin.—Any objections? All I have to add is that in bankruptcy no one ever gains anything except, of course, the lawyer. . . . *(All laugh; some applaud.)*

First Creditor.—Whatever the bank does, suits us.

Another Creditor.—What's the plan?

MacLaughlin.—Perhaps the vice-president of the bank will be so good as to outline the plan.

Banker.—Gentlemen: I am convinced that fifty-thousand dollars in cash will enable Mr. Man to cover his more pressing debts and to continue his business on a satisfactory footing. My bank is ready to obligate itself to the extent of $5000 provided the remainder is provided by the other creditors.

A Creditor (Outshouting the rest).—Here is my check!

MacLaughlin.—Just a minute, gentlemen! Let's get this right! Have we decided, then, that a fifty thousand dollar loan is to be made to Mr. Man on adequate securities? Mr. Man, it is true, is my client, but we are here first and foremost to protect your interests and to settle this matter in your favor. *(Applause.)* That is why I say, gentlemen, on adequate and satisfactory securities; and I also propose that an eye be kept on Mr. Man's business . . . a wise and experienced eye. . . . *(Nods in the direction of the* BANKER. *Applause.)*

A Creditor (Contented).—A lawyer's brains!

Another Creditor.—That fellow sure knows his business!

Another Creditor.—Well, if the bank is with us then . . .

Another Creditor.—I'll give my share on the spot.

MacLaughlin.—Just a moment! Before I call the checks, I have a surprise for you. You have asked me why my client did not appear at this meeting. Let me tell you that he was the very first to show up; I had great difficulty in persuading him to absent himself. He wanted to hand over to you the keys to all that he possesses . . . everything, except, of course, his beautiful young wife, whom, you will readily understand, he wants to keep for himself. *(Laughter.)* It will indeed be a great surprise for him to hear of your generous action. And since he is at present in the other room, I suggest that we call him in. *(Applause.* MACLAUGHLIN *gets up and leaves the room; commotion of curiosity among the* CREDITORS. MACLAUGHLIN *soon returns self-satisfied.* MR. MAN *follows without the* SELVES; *he walks unsteadily, yet with assumed courage. He is pale and nervous. It is evident that he is straining himself toward self-control, and ready to look everyone in the eye. As he approaches the table, he becomes somewhat shaky. His eyes search for a vacant chair; but the seats at that end of the table which he reaches first are all taken, and he is obliged to pass all the* CREDITORS *before he can find a chair. It is evident that he does not know whether it is proper for him to sit down or stand as though he were on trial. As he passes the* BANKER, *the latter rises;* MR. MAN *is somewhat taken aback by this sudden gesture; the vice-president extends his hand to* MR. MAN; MR. MAN *takes it, bewildered, unsteady.)*

Banker (Pressing Mr. Man's *hand with exaggerated warmth).*—I am extremely pleased to see you here with us, Mr. Man. *(One after another the* Creditors *rise and repeat the same thing.* Mr. Man *is bewildered, entirely overcome and does not know what to make of all this; he seems to be frightened. He begins to wonder whether he is not the victim of a mocking sport. He is however determined to see it all through; he smiles, when he catches a sympathetic smile. Each time some one offers a hand to him, he makes a frightened move backwards, and then extends his own hand. When he has finally acknowledged all the greetings, he sinks into a chair; he is still in a haze and throws a suspicious and uneasy glance at* MacLaughlin. *The latter is radiating joy and victory.* Mr. Man *lowers his head. There is momentary silence.)*

MacLaughlin.—Mr. Man, we have sentenced you to life . . . to serve in your own real estate office . . . and may you do big business! *(All laugh contentedly.)* And now I shall ask the vice-president to speak; he will pronounce the sentence. *(Laughter.)*

Vice-president (Very serious).—Mr. Man, we have carefully considered your financial situation in your own interests and in ours, and we have come to the conclusion that you deserve a chance to make good. . . . *(*Mr. Man *attempts to say something, but seeing that the vice-president has not finished, he remains silently seated.)* We have therefore decided to grant you a loan of fifty thousand dollars, to cover your most pressing debts and to enable you to go on with your business. *(*Mr. Man *rises to say something; vice-president continues to speak.)* You must understand, however, that such opportunities do not come twice in a life time and what we will expect. . . . *(*Mr. Man *signifies that he wants to say something; but the vice-president continues.)* And I believe we are all justified in expecting that . . . *(*Mr. Man *shakes his head;* Banker *somewhat irritated.)* What's the matter?

Mr. Man.—No, no, no! I don't want it!

Banker (Annoyed).—What don't you want?

Mr. Man.—I don't want your money! I don't want any loans! Enough . . . enough. . . . There's come an end to all this. . . . *(For a moment there is silence. Everyone is overcome with amazement as if not believing his own ears.)*

MacLaughlin (Hardly recovered from the shock).—As your attorney, I must say I don't understand you. These men are willing to lend you fifty thousand dollars. Mr. Man, you must have misunderstood their intentions!

Mr. Man (Pale and nervous).—Yes . . . yes . . . yes . . . I have understood. . . . I've clearly understood. . . . I don't want all this. I want to live. . . . I want life. . . . I want life . . . and not your cursed fifty thousand. I don't want your money. . . . I don't want it!

A Creditor.—Oh, he doesn't want it!

Another Creditor (More calmly).—Mr. Man, you haven't the right . . .

Another Creditor.—What do you mean by you don't want?

Mr. Man.—I can't go on! . . . I can't . . . I don't want to! . . . I don't want any more money! I want to live. . . . *(Puts his hand to his head in despair.)* I can't go on! I've had enough!

A Creditor.—Of all the brazen nerve!

Banker (Ironically).—I suppose Mr. Man thinks he has enough money; he's going to retire and live on his income!

A Creditor.—He's got to come across first! Pay his debts!

Another Creditor (Ironically).—He doesn't want to!

Banker (He rises; they all follow. . . . Confusion. Noise. The vice-president signifies that he has something to say; the noise subsides).—Gentlemen, under the circumstances, we are obliged to resort to law!

(All the CREDITORS *at once.)*

—The law! . . . That's the best thing!
—Jail him, I say!
—He's got plenty of dough!
—And in his wife's name, too, I suppose!
—Safe and sound!
—We'll find that out!
—Seen such smart alecks before. . . .
—The law! That's the thing!
—I said so from the first.

Banker (Signifies that he has more to say; the noise subsides).—Our conscience is clear. We had the best intentions; we have tried to do the right thing by Mr. Man. But he is making a fool of us.

Mr. Man.—Gentlemen! I put at your disposal all my property. . . . Everything I possess! Gentlemen! I implore you, let me out of this. . . . I don't want it! I can't. . . . I must not! . . . Gentlemen!

Banker.—Mr. Man, just consider how fortunate you are. Millions of others would be happy to be given such a chance!

Mr. Man.—That's just what I don't want! I don't want this chance! . . . It doesn't make me happy. . . . Money doesn't make me happy! . . .

Banker (Calm).—You must not forget, Mr. Man, that you have obligations to your creditors and to yourself, and to your wife! . . . Mr. Man, if we weren't sure that this is the best thing both for you and for us . . . I understand you well. . . . We all understand you, we sympathize with you, we know how hard this has been for you. . . .

First Creditor.—Why certainly! He's all upset! Just let him calm down and think it over and he'll know we're right.

Second Creditor.—It's no cinch . . . losing so much money!

Third Creditor.—With so much good-will and consideration you can make it all good!

Fourth Creditor.—But it's not so easy . . . when you have to begin from the bottom of the ladder all over again!

Fifth Creditor.—Especially when you've been at the top!

Sixth Creditor.—And with your scruples. . . .

Seventh Creditor.—As long as we back him and he sticks to us. . . .

Banker (Pleading).—Mr. Man! (MR. MAN *stands motionless, lost in thought as if struggling with himself.)*

MacLaughlin (Pleading).—Mr. Man!

The Creditors (Together).—Mr. Man! *(A moment of tense silence.)*

Mr. Man (Suddenly; hysterical).—I don't want it! I don't want your money. . . . Please understand me. . . . It's not the loan. I mean all money. . . . The millions . . . I don't want money! . . . I don't need it. . . . I was happier without it . . . before I had wealth I lived my life. Don't you understand? . . . I was myself . . . I was I, I, I . . . not money. . . . Understand? What I got out of life, I got . . . not my money . . . I, my own self. And since I've become rich, I've changed. . . . My I has perished. . . . Do you see what I've become? . . . I've perished! . . . I've become money! I wasn't I anymore to anyone. I was money . . .

money . . . money, just as you are now. Look at yourselves, you're nothing more than money . . . nothing more . . . money! And I? I don't want . . . I don't want to perish! Understand? I want to live! I want to be myself!

Banker (Rises; he has lost his temper).—Enough of that crazy talk! *(To the* CREDITORS.*)* Come on!

Mr. Man (In despair, pleading).—Gentlemen, I implore you! Please! *(He puts his head in his hands.)* I can't! I can't! I can't!

Banker.—We'll see what the law can do for us! *(He leaves demonstratively. The rest of the* CREDITORS *follow him, all talking at once.)*

MacLaughlin (Shaking his fists in MR. MAN'S *face).*—What the devil do you call this? What the Hell does this mean?

Mr. Man (Emphatically).—I don't want to be a slave for money any longer.

MacLaughlin.—Then what the devil do you want?

Mr. Man (Lost).—Nothing. . . . I'll work. . . . I'll work, as many others do. . . .

MacLaughlin (Laughing).—You work? After all these years of luxury?

Mr. Man (As if apologizing).—Millions of others work.

MacLaughlin.—And do you think you'll find more happiness that way?

Mr. Man (In a low voice).—I'm not looking for happiness.

MacLaughlin (Mocking him).—So you want to change the world . . . to recreate it.

Mr. Man (Pleading).—No . . . no, no, no. . . . I want to recreate myself . . . myself. . . . I want to find myself.

MacLaughlin (Pointing to MR. MAN'S *head).*—You are mad! You are crazy, that's what's wrong with you! *(Leaves the room angrily.)*

Mr. Man (His shoulders bent, his head drooping, he remains standing for a while fixed to the spot; and then walks slowly out of the room.)

ACT IV

SCENE I

(A few months later. A room in a cheap hotel. There is but one window which is opposite a wall; there is a bed in the

center of the room, two old rocking chairs, a sink, a dresser. Evening. MR. MAN, *on a rocking chair, is reading a newspaper.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE, *on the side of the chair, reads, looking over* MR. MAN'S *shoulder. Crosswise on the bed are some of the* SELVES; *one of them is facing* MR. MAN, *his face full of hatred; another, with his head buried in the pillow, is weeping. The rest of the* SELVES *are scattered about the room, huddled in their corners. They have become veritable shadows, sad, brooding, shabby.* MR. MAN *is dressed in working-trousers, a blue shirt with rolled-up sleeves; his face is tranquil.)*

One of the Selves.—One could die of loneliness here!

Second Self.—And go crazy!

Third Self.—If one could at least go to a movie!

Fourth Self.—All day long in the factory . . . and then back to this hole. . . .

First Self.—Cooped up all day long! . . . without seeing a soul. . . .

Mr. Man.—My Uncle will be here soon.

First Self.—And a swell time will we all have, eh?

Mr. Man.—Were you happier when you were better off?

Second Self.—We didn't know any better then.

Mr. Man.—You don't know much more now.

All the Selves.—We can't go on like this.

Mr. Man.—But I can!

Second Self.—Trying to be different!

First Self.—And such a pauper!

Third Self.—One can be just as different, money or no money!

Fourth Self.—In fact it's easier with money!

Mr. Man.—No! A thousand times no! You can be anything but yourself! . . .

Second Self.—Others seem to manage. . . .

Mr. Man.—They don't! Money is a curse!

First Self.—Money makes it easier!

He With the Sad Smile.—Easier! *(Severe.)* Money is labor!

Mr. Man.—Someone else's labor. If the price of labor is fifty cents per hour and one has a million dollars, one has hoarded two million hours of labor . . . other people's labor! . . . You don't want to work for others, do you? You refuse.

But you wouldn't refuse to have others work for you, would you? You'd want them to work for you!

One of the Selves.—Let them worry, let those worry who have to work! . . . They can take care of themselves!

Mr. Man (Excited).—They do worry! And in some places they have actually become masters of their own labor.

Some of the Selves (Together).—Then let's go there.

Mr. Man.—Always go . . . go . . . go! You want to run away . . . you want to run away from cares! You want to go where things are ready for you and all is smooth. Why not try here?

One of the Selves.—Why want to be different from everybody?

Mr. Man.—Everybody! Aping others! What's the matter with me? Where am I?

(The SELVES *surround* MR. MAN *and plead with him.)*

—Mr. Man!

—Let's try . . . just once more!

All the Selves (Simultaneously).—Just once more!

—It's tough this way!

—We can't bear this!

—You're so gifted!

—And so young!

—Life is so short!

—Time flies! . . . You'll be old soon! . . .

—And then the end!

—The end . . . and all is over!

—And now!

—You're still young!

—And strong!

—Let's try!

—Begin all over again!

—In a small way!

—Gradually!

—They'll back you!

—We'll help you. . . .

—We'll be true to you. . . .

—Mr. Man. . . .

—Have compassion!

—Think of us. . . .

—Think of yourself!

—Mr. Man. . . .

Mr. Man (While they are speaking MR. MAN'S *head sinks lower and lower; his face in his hands, sighs as if he were in physical agony. He pushes them away roughly).*—Leave me alone! Get away! *(They separate and fall back into their respective corners. A knock at the door;* MR. MAN *jumps up, overjoyed.)* My Uncle! *(Opens the door, takes a step back, amazed and overjoyed.)* Miss Donald! What brings you here? *(Checks himself.)* Come in! *(All the* SELVES, *overjoyed, run over.)*

First Self (In a surprised voice expressing delight, half suppressed).—Miss Donald!

Second Self (The same).—Miss Donald!

Third Self.—Miss Donald!

Mr. Man (Makes room for her).—My, it's nice of you not to forget me. *(Hardly able to control his emotions; he takes her hand.)* How good of you. . . . Sit down, won't you?

Miss Donald (Embarrassed; sits down).—There's someone waiting for me downstairs. *(*MR. MAN *and his* SELVES *are all disappointed.)* I've brought you a debt. . . .

Mr. Man (Somewhat upset and timorous).—A debt? *(The* SELVES *wait suspiciously.)*

Miss Donald.—I collected it from my neighbor, the dentist. He gave me a check for five hundred for you.

All the Selves (With joy).—Ah! . . . Ah! . . .

Mr. Man (Somewhat disappointed).—Why . . . *(*MISS DONALD *hands him the check; he takes it indifferently, without as much as looking at it, and puts it on the dresser.)* May come in handy . . . thank you.

Miss Donald (Pleased).—I knew you would need it! . . .

Mr. Man.—Yes, my Uncle's wife will soon have triplets, I suppose . . . she has had twins once before, you know. . . . And I still owe him five hundred. *(The* SELVES *draw long faces.)*

Miss Donald.—But you need the money yourself!

Mr. Man.—On the contrary. I'm working now. I don't need it. He has a wife and children to support and this money was the last of his savings. And I know how badly he needs it. Remember the first five hundred I returned to him? *(Smiling to* MISS DONALD.*)* Remember? Well that money is all gone now. *(Smiling.)* And he was the only one who gave without taking.

Miss Donald (Disappointed, rises).—I must . . .

Mr. Man.—Oh, yes, there's somebody waiting . . . why not ask them to come up?

Miss Donald.—We're going to the Movies.

Mr. Man.—Gentleman-friend?

Miss Donald.—Yes, my . . . *(Shows him engagement ring.)*

Mr. Man.—Oh, congratulations! *(He presses her hand; all the* SELVES *follow mechanically and coldly.)* Why didn't he come up with you?

Miss Donald (Uneasy).—No. . . . No. . . . I must go immediately, or we'll be late.

Mr. Man (Holding her hand).—Well, many thanks . . . if you care to, come to see me sometimes . . . with your . . .

Miss Donald.—Yes . . . sometimes. . . . Good night.

Mr. Man (Accompanying her to the door).—Good night and many thanks.

(He remains at the door, lost in thought. The SELVES *anxiously examine the check; they hold a whispered and animated conversation; all at once they approach* MR. MAN, *surround him as before and speak to him quietly, yet pleadingly.* MR. MAN *is still lost in thought.)*

—Mr. Man!

—Keep the money.

—Let's make a getaway!

—Somewhere . . .

—Far away . . .

—Where it's different . . .

—Where we can live . . .

—Yes, live in comfort . . .

—Escape . . .

—Before the trial.

—To avoid jail . . .

—*(All together.)* Jail! *(They utter the word jail with strange fear.)*

(They huddle about MR. MAN, *as if frightened by the thought, and plead.)*

—Mr. Man. . . .

—Save us from jail . . .

—Let's leave this place . . .

—Now . . .

—Before your Uncle comes . . .
—We'll send him the money . . .
—We'll send it when we're there . . .
—He won't mind it.

All together.—Mr. Man! *(They fall upon their knees, surrounding* MR. MAN *who has rmained fixed and motionless throughout. A knock at the door; the* SELVES *scatter.* MR. MAN, *assuming calmness, opens the door.)*

Mr. Man.—So here you are! I thought you'd never come!

Mr. Man's Uncle (Clasping hands warmly).—How do you like that? D'you think it's easy to get away from the family? It's mighty hard, boy! Mighty hard! Unless, of course, you bring the whole gang along . . . the wife and the children. . . . As it is, I had to promise to return soon.

Mr. Man.—Why didn't you bring them along? Well! *(Glances at the* SELVES.*)* It's sort of dull around here . . . they might have livened this place up a bit. . . .

Mr. Man's Uncle.—You bet they would.

Mr. Man.—Anyhow, I got something nice for you to take home for them.

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Let's see what it is. *(*MR. MAN *hands over check.)* A phoney one?

Mr. Man.—It's a good check, you fool, for five hundred!

Mr. Man's Uncle (Pleased).—You mean it? By jingo! What's this, another boom?

Mr. Man.—A remnant of the old one! . . .

Mr. Man's Uncle (Puts the check back on the dresser).—I guess you need it yourself now. . . .

(The SELVES *have been watching this scene keenly. As soon as the Uncle puts the check back, their faces express joy.)*

Mr. Man (Giving him the check).—Take it, you fool, it's yours.

Mr. Man's Uncle (Hardly concealing his delight, yet not accepting the check).—What's true is true . . . I'll need that money badly . . . I'll say I'll need that money soon! But we can share it. . . . Sure we can . . . we can both use some of it.

Mr. Man.—But I tell you it's all yours. I don't need any money now; and miracles like these don't happen often, so take it . . . I know you'll need it soon. You'll be glad to have it. This time your wife may present you with triplets!

Mr. Man's Uncle (Laughing).—Now that I have so much money, let her have them! *(He takes the check, folds it carefully and puts it away. The* SELVES *are disappointed.)* Well, I'll say this came in time! *(Gay.)* Nothing ever goes to waste!

Mr. Man.—Yes, good or evil, nothing ever goes to waste!

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Nothing's ever lost, eh?

Mr. Man.—Whatever you do, it comes back to you!

Mr. Man's Uncle.—And sometimes with profit!

Mr. Man.—No profit, no; a gain here, means a loss there.

Mr. Man's Uncle.—But twins are surely profit without a loss for anybody.

Mr. Man.—Very likely someone loses . . . the wife . . . or you. . . .

Mr. Man's Uncle (Reflectively).—I'll say someone loses . . . loses health . . . years . . . strength. . . . They grow stronger and we grow weaker. . . . They grow more and we grow less.

Mr. Man (Laughs).—No profits. . . . No loss! Look at this! *(Newspaper in hand.)* "Company makes Six Million in Six Months" . . . Now look at this! "Destitute Woman Poisons Her Children and Commits Suicide." And millions of people read this and don't grasp what it's all about. Profits! Your gain . . . my loss! Profits!

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Say, hold your horses! Don't yell at me. . . . It's not my fault!

Mr. Man.—I didn't mean to yell. I was just . . .

Mr. Man's Uncle.—To tell the truth, it seems to me . . .

Mr. Man.—What?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—That you shouldn't have ignored such an opportunity. . . .

Mr. Man.—What opportunity are you talking about?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—As I was saying to my wife . . . Here's someone who has a chance to begin all over again . . . to get rich . . . and the fool refuses it.

Mr. Man (Not believing himself).—You! You too?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Just wait and see. You still don't know what it means to work for someone else and get your pay once a week! . . . and a skimpy pay at that.

Mr. Man (Still astonished at the words).—Are you saying those things? You!

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Wait and see. . . . You'll soon learn to split pennies. . . . *(*MR. MAN *wants to say something.)*

Wait! Do you think that it's easy to deny oneself pleasure, all those pleasures that other's enjoy?

Mr. Man.—Well, that's just what I was against. . . .

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Oh, so you're waiting for a dream to come true! But what until then? Must you live in poverty while others are surrounded by luxuries? . . . *(The* SELVES *listen attentively).*

He With the Sad Smile.—False, base pleasures!

Mr. Man.—Listen! Once, long ago when I was poor, I humiliated myself to borrow two dollars. I wanted to see the clavalogue, the color symphony that was being shown in a movie. It was a spring day. I had to stand in line for half an hour, before I could reach the box-office, and get my ticket. Then I had to sit through a two hour stupid program. And at last the clavalogue displayed its powers! What beautiful colors! . . . But it was no more than five minutes! When I came out I was exhausted, fagged out. . . . I lost myself in the crowds. . . . I felt free! I was happy! I raised my head to breathe the air! And behold! What beautiful colors! . . . The setting sun! . . . There were a thousand clavalogues in the sky! . . . But did anyone else of the crowd enjoy it? Did they see it? Not a soul. . . . I wanted to cry, to tell them, to implore them, to cry out: Look! See! Not one! Not one! But they were all ready to push and crowd, to pay two dollars for a stupid movie! . . . Pleasure! . . . Fools . . . Apes . . .

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Wait and see! . . . You've a lot to learn yet. . . .

Mr. Man.—What's all this? You? An honest workingman?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—I must admit . . . you can think whatever you want of me . . . I don't understand . . .

Mr. Man (Disappointed).—What is there to understand?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—I can't understand your heroism . . . what can it accomplish?

He With the Sad Smile.—Heroism!

Mr. Man.—Is being an honest man heroism?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—Well, if it pleases you! *(Looks at his watch.)* Now I must be running home.

Mr. Man.—What's the hurry?

Mr. Man's Uncle.—I don't want to get into trouble at home. *(Lost in thought; they shake hands.)* Good-bye!

(As soon as MR. MAN'S UNCLE *has shut the door, the* SELVES *surround* MR. MAN *closely, in a ring which has been forming itself gradually.* MR. MAN *is still lost in thought. They murmur with pleading voices.)*

—Mr. Man, have you heard? *(*MR. MAN *is silent; they say one at a time:)*

—And how he used to envy you!

—Let's begin all over again!

—Something new . . . different!

—Gradually . . .

—Before it's too late.

—You'll help others . . .

(All, pleading).—You'll help others . . .

—You'll help him . . . your Uncle . . .

—How tired he is of poverty!

—He wants you to be rich!

—He knows what poverty means.

—Help him . . .

—Help him . . . surprise him . . .

—Him

—He needs you . . .

—He's lost all hope . . .

—You . . .

—Mr. Man . . .

—For his sake . . .

—Save him . . .

—Give him all you can . . .

—Let him have comfort . . .

—Some of the pleasures of which he spoke . . .

—So eagerly . . .

—Help him . . .

—Mr. Man . . .

(All).—Mr. Man!

*(*MR. MAN *who has been struggling with himself throughout, interrupts them; he speaks with severity and determination.)*

Mr. Man.—Away! Enough of self-deception. *(The* SELVES *move away in a body. Their faces express anger and hatred.)* It's time to go to bed. Tomorrow is a working day.

SCENE II

(The same room, two months later. The eve of the bankruptcy trial. Early morning hour. MR. MAN *is in bed, sleeping in his clothing. The bed is in the center of the room. A ray of light from the transom falls upon his face. Through the window a glaring light, which comes from the window of an opposite wall. The intoxicated laughter of men and women; screams, giggles, shouting, are heard through the window; also the tones of an accordion. At the window sit two* SELVES*; they are weary and pale; the light that falls across their faces gives them a ghostly and piteous expression. Some of the* SELVES *are rocking themselves in the rocking chairs, nervously and jerkily. Others are whispering menacingly in a corner.*

MR. MAN *sleeps restlessly, tossing and groaning. The two* SELVES *at the window are absorbed in whatever they can see through the window opposite; they whisper excitedly.)*

First Self.—Absolutely nude!

Second Self.—The men too.

First Self.—They all seem drunk!

Second Self.—What a grand time they're having.

First Self.—There must be another room there.

Second Self.—Yes, to the right. It's hard to see.

First Self (Outburst of laughter is heard).—Did you hear that?

Second Self.—Did you see those two? The two women?

First Self.—Cronies.

Second Self.—The two of them . . . after that fat fellow . . .

First Self.—Paradise!

Second Self.—Not like this dead place!

First Self (Points toward man).—Asleep!

Second Self.—In his clothes! He was only going to lie down for a while.

First Self.—A few hours before the trial.

Second Self.—And now he is fast asleep. . . .

First Self.—A make-belief! How can he sleep!

Second Self.—He is afraid too. . . .

First Self.—It's quieter now . . . over there . . . *(Pointing to opposite window.)* They must be in the other room.

Second Self.—Lucky bums!

First Self.—Not like us!

Second Self (Pointing to MR. MAN*).*—Became a saint suddenly!

First Self.—A crazy notion to be different!

Second Self.—We'll have to get ready for the trial soon. Did you hear the laughter? *(They both listen attentively.)*

First Self.—It is a laughable situation!

Second Self.—When I think of the trial . . .

First Self.—And the creditors angry. . . . We will be found guilty!

Second Self.—As sure as I live!

First Self.—What a life!

Second Self.—Jail.

First Self.—If only the morning would never come!

Second Self.—I'll never bear it!

First Self.—I'll go mad!

One of the Selves (Leaves his rocking-chair; walks quietly up to the bed, stands over MR. MAN *and speaks as if in his sleep.)*

Mr. Man!
Come down—down . . . down . . .
To the women of the town . . .
Women with soft flesh, and wise
Clinging hands ond yielding eyes,
Soft for you and sweet for you.
Let us do as others do. . . .
Is it just to put to shame
Yourself . . . your seeking heart of flame? . . .
And others . . .
Mr. Man! Come down. . . .

(He stands at the bedside a while; then he walks away with his head lowered. The SECOND SELF *approaches the bed in the same manner.)*

Mr. Man!
Give back my strength, my power
That I may govern others . . .
That I may govern others . . .
Not with ill-intent.
Men are all my brothers . . .
With mercy and with justice
Grant the wish of one

The lost dream of another.
Give back my strength, my power!

(He stands at the bedside a while; then he walks away with his head lowered. The THIRD SELF *approaches the bed in the same manner.)*

Mr. Man!
Dress us in our finest!
Take us to the Plaza . . .
Take us to the Plaza.
Dine us, wine us, mate us
With the perfumed harlot;
Hands touching breasts
And scarlet lips half-open, panting,
Laughing, dancing, shouting.
Dress us in our finest!

(He stands at the bedside a while; then he walks away with his head lowered. The FOURTH SELF *approaches the bed in the same manner.)*

Mr. Man!
Keep your reputation.
Everybody praised you
Lauded you and blessed you.
Must you drag your name
Through the mire and gutter,
Put us all to shame,
Bring us all to grief,
Shatter the belief
Of everyone who loved you?
Mr. Man!
Keep your reputation!

All the Selves (Together, in the same manner as previously.)

Mr. Man!
You say it's wrong to rule.
Is it right to play the fool?
Is it right to play the fool?
You deny us and enslave us
To regain your own freedom.
Can wrong engender right?
Can darkness furnish light?
Can one through evil

Attain the good?
Is it right to rule
And let others be your tool?
Mr. Man! Is it right to rule?

(For a moment there is silence. They walk away with lowered heads. From the window opposite laughter, drunken, boisterous noises and songs are heard once more. From the accordion a popular melody. One of the Selves *tears himself away, begins to pound his head with his fists; he cries out in a mad voice.)*

One of the Selves.—I can't stand it! I'm going mad!

(The Second Self *tears himself away, grasps an illuminated hanging light which in reality is an invisible rope, and swings himself, ape-like, on the dangling rope.)*

Second Self.—I'm going crazy! I'm afraid! Oh, I'm afraid! Oh! Oh! Oh!

(The Lesser Selves *jump up and whine and howl like wolves in the dead of the night. All the* Selves, *coming from every way, approach* Mr. Man's *bed. They are terror-stricken and desperate; their voices are wild.)*

All the Selves.—Mr. Man! *(At this moment* Mr. Man *cries out in his sleep in a muffled voice. Suddenly he awakens.)*

Mr. Man.—Oh! *(His voice has changed; it resembles that of the* Selves, *terror-stricken, full of despair.)* What d'you want from me? *(Furious.)* What d'you want?

All the Selves (Surrounding Mr. Man; *they beat him with their fists and howl).*—We're going mad! We're going crazy! We're dying! You're killing us! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

Some of the Selves (Pulling at Mr. Man's *hands, his head, tearing at his body in a rage).*—Let's flee! Let's escape! Let's escape! We're afraid of the trial! Let's flee! *(The* Selves *chase after* Mr. Man, *toward the door.* Selves *are tearing and pulling him. They cry in wild voices.)* We don't want to go to the trial! We're afraid! Afraid! We're afraid of jail! Let's flee! Let's escape!

Mr. Man (Tears himself away; flashes a revolver, points it at the Selves *who are huddled together in a group near the door.* Mr. Man *stands erect and has become tense, appearing at this moment taller; his pale face expresses determination.)* Silence! *(The bewildered* Selves *howl frantically.)* Silence, I say, or I'll make an end to everything! *(The* Selves *are at once* *silenced; they are fixed and motionless, as if turned to stone.* MR. MAN *too. A moment of tense and strained silence, as if they were matching their powers.* MR. MAN, *through his teeth.)* Now, you'll follow wherever I lead! *(The* SELVES *lower their heads.* MR. MAN *drops his hands and the revolver. Some of the* SELVES *sink into the rockers, others rest upon the floor, or upon the edge of the bed.* MR. MAN *remains standing for a while with drooping hands. There is a sound of muffled, human sobs, a cry of resignation, coming from several of the* SELVES*; the sobs resemble that of children who have been punished and suddenly are made to feel that the adult who has overcome them, is stronger.)*

First Self.—

Oh how hard it is,
How hard it is
To live like this,
To forego the tantalizing moment
That winks and glitters
With a thousand joys.
To give your days
To what is yet afar;
Resign your desires
And let your heart go numb . . .
Waiting . . . waiting . . . waiting . . .
For what is yet to come.

(He weeps softly; for a moment there is silence. Then a voice is heard.)

Second Self.—

A world gone mad with greed
For fame and power . . .
In a race
For a shadowy face
Men call happiness.
Shall one,
In the fever of the race
Halt—?
And lock himself
Within his shell
And watch
How years go by?
And feel the distant hand

That tugs the net
Beneath our feet,
Tugging us away
Forever. . . .
Never, never to return . . . ?

(For a moment there is silence; the soft sound of the sobs is hardly heard.)

Third Self.—

I know the present
Is a flash—
A momentary thing
In the swing
Of time eternal.
You have fixed your gaze
Upon that light
That throws its blaze
Upon your sombre day
And lonely night.
But I,
Why should I,
Who come to spend herein
But a fleeting moment.
Why should I
In vain be lost
And back to dust
Return . . . ?

(For a moment there is silence; soft sobbing.)

He With the Sad Smile (Throughout the revolt he has been standing aside, watching each movement with tenseness. He approaches MR. MAN*).*—How beautifully they talk! Where have they learnt it all? I've been waiting and watching all this time and hoping . . . Mr. Man! Once and for all, decide which way you are going. . . . With me, or with them. Choose between us . . . and then slay me or else slay them! *(He pauses for a moment; there is dead silence. He repeats in an entreating yet determining tone.)* Slay me . . . or else slay them! *(Silence again.* MR. MAN *lowers his head still deeper; his hands droop, the revolver falls.* HE WITH THE SAD SMILE *stands for a moment as if lost; he stoops slowly down and picks up the revolver. Points the revolver at the* SELVES.*)* With them you will never reach the land of the just; even if you should . . .

you will betray them, as you betrayed those from whom I dragged you away. *(Bitter.)* It is more likely that you'll stop half way, remain split and double faced, to be slapped from either side; split in parts; always at war . . . yet constantly seeking peace. Bah! This is not what I dreamt of! You'd better go with them and leave the just alone. *(He points the revolver at his temple; shoots. He falls. The* SELVES *rush toward* MR. MAN, *who is at the point of breaking down. They catch him as he is about to fall, and carry him out. From the opposite window, hilarious voices are heard; drunken cries and laughter of men and women.)*

CURTAIN

THE GERM OF THE DOMESTIC DRAMA

BY FELIX SPER

The mere announcement that certain plays heretofore ascribed to Shakespeare may be the work of others will always cause flutterings in the critical coop. The puzzle of authorship has challenged many minds. The old queries: Who wrote *Arden of Feversham, the Book of Sir Thomas Moore, The Yorkshire Tragedy,* the lost *Hamlet* have darkened the air of Elizabethan scholarship for many a generation. In point of fact, anonymity should not trouble us overmuch. Appreciation should not lean on such slender props as recognized reputations. If anything, it is certain that we can come by more honest judgments through the absence of a distinguishing label. But we are only frail and will be satisfied with nothing less than certitude in matters relating to authorship.

As to who wrote *Arden of Feversham,* a question first raised by Edward Jacob who re-edited the play in the eighteenth century and ascribed it to Shakespeare, the most recent surmise is that by Professor Oliphant* who firmly upholds the belief that none other could have written the bloody tale than Kyd and Marlowe, allowing the hand of Rowley for the ruffian scenes. Collaboration, of course, was common in the day of Shakespeare. The variable quality of the scenes argues strongly for plural pens. Without laboring the point, it would be difficult to assign the play to the master-dramatist in view of such considerations as the drab domestic theme, the poverty of plot, the thinness of characterization, the crabbed and ragged rhythms. Judged even as the work of the early hackwriter who wrote *Titus Andronicus* at the age of twenty-eight, the assumption that Shakespeare had anything to do with the play must fall flat.

The Lamentable and True Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent, probably written in 1590, was entered in the Stationers' Register 3 April 1592, and published anonymously in the same year which saw on the boards *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Tamburlaine*. The bloody kinship is obvious. The incidents narrated in the play had actually occurred more than forty years before. In fact, Holinshed thought the story worthy of five pages in his *Chronicles*. Except for a few minor changes and the addition of the character of Franklin, the author followed the narrative closely.

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*Oliphant: Shakespeare and his Fellow Dramatists. (Prentice-Hall, N. Y.)

Historically, *Arden* assumes importance as the earliest specimen of English domestic tragedy: the husband-wife-lover plot. In a period which preferred the more highly pitched spectacles of kings in harness, scholar-voluptuaries spanning the world, ghostly revenges and bloody banquets, the humble domestic theme seems pale and drab. In the hands of a minor artist, the theme allows no flight into impossible regions, no bagging the universe in a series of tropes, no clouds of after-images trailing the pregnant phrase. Only in the hands of a Heywood does the subject take on glamor and even grandeur, rather than crass blood-spilling.

Episodic and loosely-strung, the plot crawls forward. When the murderers after many baffled attempts, drag Arden to his death, the point somehow misses fire. Besides, we are not moved to contemplate the futility of man clutching at destiny. Rather man dwindles to the butcher in the shambles who chooses the brutal way to get what he wants.

Freakish are the humors of these people who act with little credibility. Alice, the wife, hovers for a brief moment on the edge of doubt but quickly shifts into her original determination to murder.

Alice.—
What? Shall an oath make thee forsake my love?
As if I have not sworn as much myself,
And given my hand unto him in the church!
Tush, Mosbie; oaths are words, and words is wind,
And wind is mutable: then, I conclude,
'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

No genuine remorse is ever awakened; merely piteous whining before deserved execution. The two ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will (reminiscent of the name Shakespeare) possess vitality and hold the play together by a strength of purpose.

Gleams of poetry shoot through the play, while certain lines sound Marlowesque:

Alice.—

Ah, would he now were here that it might open!
I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,
That, like the snakes of black Tisiphone
Sting me with their embracings! Mosbie's arms
Shall compass me: and, were I made a star
I would have none other spheres but these,
There is no nectar but on Mosbie's lips!
Had chaste Diana kissed him, she, like me,
Would grow love-sick, and from her watery bower,
Fling down Endymion and snatch him up:
Then blame not me that slay a silly man
Not half so lovely as Endymion.

All in all, in the carrying out of the bloody intent, the play is raw and crude. Murder, equally with death, is not necessarily dramatic. Only poetry with the help of psychology can lift murder to the plane of tragedy that purifies; to the level of an *Agamemnon*, or an *Electra*.

Similar in treatment though different in theme stands *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. This play likewise dramatizes the facts of an actual tragedy. Early in 1595, the events herein pictured took place in Calverley Hall, Yorkshire. The story had been recorded by a pamphleteer, celebrated by a balladmonger, and by two dramatists. On 2 May, 1608, the play was entered in the Stationers' Register, and acted by the King's Men who also played *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*. Therefore conjecture has it that this little tragedy is one of four plays dealing with the same set of events. Prof. Oliphant thinks this conclusion doubtful as determined by internal evidence. He sees traces of Middleton and of Wilkins. Prof. Allardyce Nicoll believes the play to be part of a larger whole entitled: *All's One or Four Plays in One,* the four pieced together by a common tie. As to crediting Shakespeare with the authorship of the play, the facts are strongly against such ascription. To mention but one: rime is used in about twenty-five per cent. of verses at a time when Shakespeare was supposedly writing a free, blank verse.

In ten scenes, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* exhibits "a rake's progress to the gallows." The evils of drink, dice, drabs, speak their woeful warnings in didactic tones. The author takes sides as any moralist: a limitation not to be ascribed to Shakespeare.

Nevertheless, there is an advance noticeable over *Arden.* Characters begin to take shape and life. The husband, in particular, by virtue of an irascible temper, outlines sharply against the milk-and-watery portrait of the wife. Now he sways with remorse as he realizes his spendthrift ways, then stiffens with purpose as he drifts with every passion toward destruction. In anger, he wounds wife, servant, allows his brother to go off to prison for debt, and kills his two children.

The psychology is crude. In the changes of mood hovering on good and evil, there is no convincing gradation: no depth of feeling. The final penance in public is a mere sop to the groundlings. Despite the villainy of the husband, the wife tenderly forgives:

Husband.—
How now? Kind to me? Did I not wound thee,
left thee for dead?
Wife.—
Tut, far greater wounds did my breast feel:
Unkindness strikes a deeper wound than steel;
You have been still unkind to me.

This species of sentimental forgiveness has neither dramatic plausibility nor beauty. Finally when the husband exclaims:

Here's weight enough to make a heart-string crack

we admire the line but do not believe him.

Here and there, the dialogue reaches to a rude strength:

Husband (Thrown off horse).—
Oh stumbling jade, the spavin overtake thee,
The fifty diseases stop thee!
Oh, I am sorely bruised; plague founder thee!
Thou runn'st at ease and pleasure. Heart of chance!

As in the case of *Arden,* the domestic theme seems to cramp the authors. They do not fly above the doorstep. The tragic conflict traced in blood fails to rise into significance. In short, the play reads like a pathetic, or better, a *bathetic* ballad stretched on the rack of ten teeth. . . .

Then in 1607 appeared the acting version of the *Miseries* *of Inforst Marriage* by George Wilkins, which purports to narrate the consequences resulting from forcing youth to marry against its will; of compelling youth to follow a guardian's authority instead of the course of true love.

Says Scarborough, the youth:

> O 'tis too miserable
> That I a Gentleman should be thus torne
> From mine own right and forced to be foresworn.

For rambling, chaotic episodes, for incoherence leading nowhere, for strange exits and entrances, this play has few equals. Out of the mist now and then loom tender scenes rising into a vague beauty: as the love-scene between Scarborough and Clare, the fateful anticipation before Clare opens the letter. . . . Melancholy undertones drearily echo in scene after scene of fitful change, without sequential continuity.

The improbabilities are as puzzling as they are ludicrous. Clare who has fallen in love with Scarborough on first meeting feels herself married to him by promise. When the letter telling of her lover's marriage to another comes, she utters quick moans and forthwith expires in an operatic outburst about adultery. As for the strange conduct of the youth of eighteen kept under the thumb of a guardian, he deserves nothing but contempt. He is a weakling and an ass who whines without cease as he steps from excess to excess deeper into the mire, hopelessly befuddled.

> Fate, pity me because I am inforst
> For I have heard those matches have cost blood
> Where love is once begun and then withstood.

The line "that vice should thus transform man into a beast" rings like a preachment. Brutally the youth denies his wife whom he denounces as a strumpet, and his children, as bastards. He rages, bullies, browbeats as the husband in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Withal, he fails to emerge as a figure. More vividly realized are Ilford, the woman-hater, cynical and malevolent, and Butler, the servant with his sentimental offer of relief and protection for the mistreated wife.

What an impotent conclusion! A letter arrives bringing tidings of the guardian's death and repentance for the enforced marriage, together with double bequests to the wronged youth.

Suddenly the wastrel realizes his errors, recognizes his wife and babes, and promises to amend his evil ways. Glory be! The pangs of conscience suddenly vanish at the touch of gold. . . . And all is well. . . .

The dialogue is artificial, line-for-line speech. But racy verses are put in the mouths of drabs and menials. For the most part, the talk is generalized chatter; trite moralizings on man and wife before the law, on adultery, cuckolds, etc. One specimen rises above the normal level and deserves mention:

> Women are the Purgatory of men's Purses, the Paradise of their bodies, and the Hell of their minds. Marry none of them. Women are in churches Saints, abroad Angels, at home, Devils.

The play is further marred by excess sentiment foreshadowing the sentimental drama of the next century. For example, the servant, dismissed into the cold by an irascible master, cries out:

> Know that I scorn
> To wear this livery so worthy borne,
> And live so base a life, old as I am,
> Ile rather be a begger than your man,
> And there's your service for you. (Exit).

Presently he returns with vows to share his savings with his mistress. How familiar the situation has become. Recall old Adam in *As You Like It,* and hundreds of similar cases up to the old mammy in Civil War plays.

The outpour of musty sentiment, the mock-sublimities, the platitudes about wealth and honor, the forced unions and defrauded heirs, the plottings, cozenage and cony-catching, the raw materials which a Kyd or a Marlowe once transformed into lofty poetry, in the hands of a Wilkins show up undraped and unshaped. I think I have discovered the English ancestor of *After Dark, or Neither Maid, Wife nor Widow.*

Curiously, the *Miseries* resembles *A Yorkshire Tragedy* in theme as well as in treatment. There is reason to believe that the second play might be a missing act or an interlude extracted from the first. The different endings, however, argue against such a conclusion, unless somebody tinkered with the last scene. Besides, the poetry of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is saner and firmer. I therefore attribute the two plays to two different sources.

If the three plays treated are but germs or buds of the shoot of domestic drama, then *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is the full-blown flower with petals spread to the sun. Though written five years before the *Miseries of Inforst Marriage,* the play represents an incredible advance. Based on a current proverb of ironic meaning, the play might more aptly be called *Virtue Betrayed and Virtue Triumphant.* The double plot serves to illustrate the contrast between frailty with the customary retribution, and purity with the conventional reward of marriage, etc.

Again, the setting of the play is Yorkshire: that woeful centre of domestic tangle. Knit more firmly than the predecessors herein mentioned, enlivened with more vivacity in marriage and tavern scenes, hawking and duelling, the play cuts more deeply into the Elizabethan background.

Though the two plots hardly cross, the story hinges on the idea of the cuckoo who lays his egg in another bird's nest. Events proceed to a point of extra-marital intimacy when a sudden turn, unusual for those times, brings the play to a curtain. The lover caught in the arms of an innocent wife is allowed to go free, while the wife is banished to the husband's country estate: a death penalty to a spirited woman of London.

I charge thee never after this sad day
To see me, or to meet me; or to send
By word or writing, gift or otherwise,
To move thee by thyself, or by thy friends;
Nor challenge any part in my two children.
So farewell, Nan; for we will henceforth be
As we had never seen, ne'er more shall see.

For deft handling of plot, the game of cards full of veiled thrusts and insinuations makes excellent theatre; also, the dying scene, as the wife expires to the moan of the wronged husband:

Even as I hope for pardon, at that day
When the Great Judge of heaven in scarlet sits
So be thou pardon'd! Though thy rash offence
Divorc'd our bodies, thy repentant tears
Unite our souls.

Admitting the obvious contrast of character between the pure wife tempted by the lover and the desired maid repelled by the sinister lord, there is little doubt that the sufferings of these people are real; the conflict in their hearts, moving and vital. In fact, the psychology of marital variability seems cast in a modern mold. The husband fears to see what he dreads to see, then soliloquizes as stage sufferers are wont to do, wishes his wife a virgin again, and vows to erase all traces of their former life. Then without hesitation he applies the screws:

> My words are registered in Heaven already.
> With patience hear me! I'll not martyr thee,
> Nor mark thee for a strumpet: with usage
> Of more humility torment thy soul, and
> Kill thee even with kindness.

And he does.

Racy idiom remarkably free from contemporary bombast snare inflections of natural speech. Shot through with fervid emotion, the dialogue succeeds in avoiding fustian and Euphuism; an amazing fact when we consider the fashions in writing of that day. But more important by far, we note for the first time the unifying power of an *idea*: a serious social problem dramatized sincerely.

From episodic treatment of attempted murder, from tempestuous railing against the usages of fortune and the miseries attendant upon enforced marriage, the advance to serious concern with marital constancy is certain if not astonishing. *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is no mean prelude to *A Doll's House.*

WIDOWS' EYES

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Serafín and Joaqúin
Álvarez Quintero

Authorized Translation by
Ana Lee Utt

Cast of Characters

Olvido *(means Forgetfulness)*
Consuelo
Leandro

A little Andalusian village in the neighborhood of the hermitage of San Roque, adjoining the famous springs of Almarín, a watering-place for the treatment of neurasthenic cases.

A charming country landscape, teeming with the fragrance of early spring. At the actor's right, a stone bench, of a rough and discarded appearance.

Olvido *and* Consuelo, *a lady and her little maid, enter at the left, the supposed direction of the hermitage; they are out for a walk.* Olvido *is young, beautiful, interesting. She is dressed in black, but not without the slight discreet and coquettish touches that indicate an alleviation of her grief is not far distant.* Consuelo *is one of those radiant daughters of Andalusia that are fitted to be queens as servants. Just a question of fortune.*

Olvido (After revelling in silence for a few moments in the entrancing place and air).—What a lovely day! How much light! . . . What a delightful field! And what fragrance! . . . I am getting so much pleasure just from having a nose.

Consuelo.—From what?

Olvido.—From breathing this fragrant air, which seems to be a divine gift to Andalusia.

Consuelo.—That's what all strangers say: that here the country smells nicer and stronger than anywhere else. There isn't any country in Madrid, is there? There are only streets!

Olvido.—No, my dear woman; whatever made you think that? The country is not so easy to find as in this town, but still there are fields.

Consuelo.—That's just what I suspected.—Did the senora like the hermitage of San Roque?

Olvido.—Very much: for its simplicity, for its lack of pretension. . . . I cannot endure those modern churches, so gaudy and overly-decorated. You feel more like praying in these hermitages; they seem more in keeping with our conception of God.

Consuelo.—Don't get *malencholic.*[1]

Olvido.—Have no fear. . . .

Consuelo.—How well the waters are agreeing with you!

Olvido.—Wonderfully! I bless my doctor, who was the first to tell me about them. I had never heard a word of either Almarín or its miracle-contriving waters. And they have so lessened my fits of the blues that, well, you can see for yourself: I came to the watering-place for a fortnight . . . and I have staid in the town for over a month.

Consuelo.—The waters are very highly recommended for those who don't sleep well; for those who have 'plectic attacks; for those who grow sad without any misfortune . . . even for those who are a little off in the head.

Olvido.—I am slightly affected with all those things.

(Is about to sit down, but stops at CONSUELO'S *imperious and unexpected cry.)*

Consuelo.—Don't sit down on that bench!

Olvido.—Why, my dear girl?

Consuelo.—Don't sit down! *(With an accent of superstition.)* They say if a woman sits down there just once—she never gets married!

Olvido (Laughing).—Is that what they say?

Consuelo.—That very thing.

Olvido (Spontaneously).—I wonder why that man asked me to meet him here then?

Consuelo.—What?

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[1] The Spanish peasant is quick mentally, pretty generally, but is illiterate to a surprising degree.

Olvido.—I was not speaking to you.

Consuelo.—Ah! Just look at the green mould on the bench. It shows that no girl of this town will come within two yards of it. . . .

Olvido.—But what reason is there for that story?

Consuelo.—Are you speaking to me now?

Olvido.—Yes.

Consuelo.—Well, they say, señora—this is 'way, 'way far back—, there was once going to be a wedding at San Roque's, and the bride sat down on that bench to wait for the bride-groom . . . and the bride-groom jilted her and never came! Others say a very loving husband shot himself here, when he found out his wife was faithless. And others, that seeing it's San Roque's hermitage, and San Roque is always painted with pumpkins[1] . . . The result is the bench has that reputation: the girl who sits down on it, never marries.

Olvido.—Seeing that I've been married once and do not intend marrying again . . . ay! . . . I can sit down with a clear conscience.

(Does so.)

Consuelo (Considering her mistress' misfortune as irreparable now).—Ah! . . . How disappointed some young men will be!

Olvido.—On my account?

Consuelo.—As though the señora had not gotten the young men of the town very much excited! How hard it is for me to call you señora, when you are so young!

Olvido (Sighing).—Ay! . . .

Consuelo.—Don't get *malencholic.*

(Pause.)

Olvido.—What time can it be, Consuelo? My watch stopped. . . .

Consuelo.—When you sat down on the bench?

Olvido.—Hush, silly. What time can it be?

Consuelo.—About half past three. But if you wish to know right to the minute, I'll ask the sacristan.

Olvido.—No, it doesn't matter. The walk has tired me.

Consuelo.—That's because there's quite a stretch from the village here. I, too, feel it in my legs.

Olvido.—Sit down.

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[1] The pumpkin is the symbol of being given the mitten.

Consuelo (Distrustfully moving away from the bench).—Like a flash I will! The señora must excuse me.

Olvido.—Ah, ha, ha! How amusing!

Consuelo (Her attention attracted on the right).—Who's that coming over there?

Olvido.—Who's coming? Some one who's here for the waters?

Consuelo.—No, no, senora; it's a senorito of the village. Doña Josefa Rincon's son.

Olvido.—Ah! yes: Leandro. I was expecting him.

Consuelo.—You say you were expecting him?

Olvido.—We agreed to meet on this spot.

Consuelo (Puzzled).—And you had the courage to sit down?

Olvido.—Well, you can see for yourself; I'm waiting for him—and sitting down . . .

Consuelo.—That señorito is a catch.

Olvido.—He can take his pick of the village.

Consuelo.—Only he doesn't seem to care for any of the girls. And it can't be because there aren't any pretty ones, nor because they don't try to hook him. It seems what happens is, that spending half the year in Madrid, he's accustomed to more refinement and more dignity. And he's very fickle.

Olvido.—I, for my part . . . Just fancy: am going to discuss some business with him. . . .

Consuelo.—Some business?

Olvido.—It seems he is the one who manages his mother's property. . . .

Consuelo.—Yes, señora.

Olvido.—And I have taken it into my head to buy that farm they own at the entrance to the village.

Consuelo.—The *Huerta de los Dátiles?*[1]

Olvido.—Precisely. My health has improved so in Almarín, that I'm going to compel myself to spend a few weeks here, every now and then, by acquiring some property in the village.

Consuelo.—Oh, how fine!—The señorito is almost here. And he's laughing as he comes; as though he were coming to see his sweetheart.

Olvido.—Well, you can see how different things really are.

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[1] Farm of Dates.

Consuelo.—In the meanwhile, will you allow me to go and talk to the sacristan?

Olvido.—Go on.

Consuelo.—Because I'll have the señora know that the sacristan likes me.

Olvido.—You don't say!

Consuelo.—And I like the sacristan.

Olvido.—Then! . . .

Consuelo.—The only thing that makes me hesitate is the cassock. To be courted by a man who wears a cassock, I consider as going against the church. *(*OLVIDO *laughs.)* By the señora's leave.

(Departs on the left, decided that the sacristan shall forget his altars for a while.)

(Pause. OLVIDO *bends her head and lowers her eyes. Nevertheless the corner of one seems inclined to wander towards the right.)*

*(*LEANDRO *enters. He is a young man of that locality who has seen the world. Or who thinks he has seen it.)*

Leandro.—Olvidito, good-afternoon.

Olvido.—Good-afternoon, Leandro.

Leandro.—How punctual . . . and how stunning!

Olvido.—This is the place that you suggested for our talk, isn't it?

Leandro.—Precisely this place, no. Let the truth be told. I mentioned the vicinity of the hermitage; do you remember?—And I expected to find you on that other bench.

Olvido.—Why one more than the other?

Leandro.—That one seems to be more in the shade. . . .

Olvido.—There isn't a scorching sun to-day.

Leandro.—No, but it is quite warm.

(The man puffs as though it were hard for him to get his breath, and smooths his mustache more than is his custom.)

Olvido.—I see you are a little nervous.

Leandro.—Nervous? No, señorita! What makes you say that?

Olvido.—Oh, I don't know! . . . It seemed to me. . . .

Leandro.—Well, of course your presence would affect me somewhat.

Olvido.—My dear man, if it were unexpected, perhaps. . . .

But knowing since last night, you've surely had time to accustom yourself to the idea. . . .

Leandro.—There are realities, Olvido, there are realities . . . that when they are approached . . . are approached . . . approached . . .

Olvido.—Stop your approach . . . and making faces. I fear that you, too, will have to drink these waters.

Leandro.—No, no . . . no, señora. Unless you prescribe them for me! . . .

Olvido.—If that's all you're waiting for . . . I shall prescribe them for every one. In my sad loneliness, in the unrest of my soul . . . I owe them so very much! . . . my bodily health, which means, at least, half of one's spiritual well-being. Sit down, Leandro.

Leandro.—You wish me to sit down?

Olvido.—Yes, I mean if you wish to sit down.

Leandro.—I, yes. . . With much pleasure. . . . *(Remains standing.)*

Olvido.—Well, I can't see it.

Leandro.—The truth is I'm surprised at your . . . I don't know as I dare. . . Have you heard the story about this little bench?

Olvido.—Consuelo has told it to me.

Leandro.—And so. . . .

Olvido.—So, what?

Leandro.—You do not believe in superstitions, traditions?

Olvido.—Quite the opposite: it was because I believed in them that I sat down on this bench without a moment's hesitation—and not on the other, my friend.

Leandro (Swallowing hard).—I see. *(Silence. Then suddenly he makes up his mind and sits down beside* OLVIDO, *saying in jest)* God's will be done!

Olvido.—And how about you? Do you believe what is said about this bench?

Leandro.—I? Not in the least. But I rejoice that you believe in it. You are in the ideal state for a woman: a widow! How delightful!—pardon my saying this.—Never lose your swallow-like freedom!

Olvido.—Swallow-like?

Leandro.—Yes: the black wings, the . . . the little white breast. . . Besides, the swallow flies up into the sky *(says* *"cielo," Castilian pronunciation),* flies down to the earth. . . .

Olvido.—We're on the earth, Leandro; let's leave out the sky *(says "sielo," Andalusian pronunciation).* Ay, I've said sielo![1] Every day I pick up more of the Andalusian accent!

Leandro.—Good, pick it up! . . . So much the better for the accent. I, on the other hand, am losing mine more and more every day.

Olvido.—This conversation smacks of most everything but that preliminary to a business transaction.

Leandro.—Do not believe it: business deals start almost always by conversing about things that are a thousand miles off . . . you would think that they were afraid to take up the transaction.

Olvido.—Well, I suppose you know about such things. I, up to this moment, have never found myself. . . .

Leandro.—Why of course! Well, yes, yes; coming back to what we were discussing: keep, Olvido, the freedom that you have obtained at the price of your grief. Joyous liberty that of the heart! Oh, widows! . . . Widows! . . .

Olvido.—What enthusiasm over widows, Leandro! Do you like widows' eyes?

Leandro.—Red eyes?

Olvido.—Absurd! Widows' eyes! It's quite another thing.

Leandro.—Tell me about it.

Olvido.—The expression has a meaning all its own. A friend of mine, either somewhat of a wag, or of a poet, says that women only let grief darken their eyes for a lover or for a husband. This does not except even the betrothed. The father dies, the brother dies, the uncle dies . . . and they drape their bodies, and even their souls, in black; but their eyes are of the same color as before. The husband dies, or the lover . . . and then, then only, are their eyes, widows' eyes. What do you think of it?

Leandro.—Good! very charming. But, isn't it about time for yours to show a lessening of your sorrow?

Olvido.—*Por Dios,* stop that. . . . Let's change the conversation. You know of my unyielding decision, Leandro; my ineffaceable grief. . . .

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[1] Sielo: sky. The correct spelling: ceilo. The Andalusians pronounce "c" like "s" before "e" and "i", and the word when spelled with an "s" indicates that pronunciation.

Leandro.—Ineffaceable, Olvido? And you declare that, with your name?[1] Time will. . . .

Olvido.—No, Leandro, no; I do not believe that I am like many others. I will have widows' eyes all my life.

Leandro.—So much the better! Then they will continue to charm me all my life! *(*Olvido *smiles at him.)* The extraordinary thing is that widows' eyes should get tipsy.

Olvido.—What's that you're saying?

Leandro.—It's not the first time I've made this remark. Your eyes are tipsy: later, when you are home, see for yourself in front of the looking-glass.

Olvido.—Tipsy? Nonsense!

Leandro.—They have a sort of vagueness, a luminous hesitancy. . . . Don't talk to me; they are tipsy. And the right one has imbibed an extra glass.

Olvido.—You will make me laugh. Come, come, let's discuss the Huerta; what we're here for.

Leandro.—Not I.

Olvido.—Not you?

Leandro.—No señora.

Olvido (Arising).—Ah! well good-afternoon, then.

Leandro.—Olvido!

Olvido.—Leandro! What mistaken idea have you?

Leandro.—Do not be angry; do not be offended with me. I said I didn't come here to discuss the Huerta, because I consider the Huerta is yours from the minute you express a wish for it.

Olvido.—That is very chivalrous, but I cannot accept it.

Leandro.—We shall see.

Olvido.—No, we shall not see.

Leandro.—Well then, we shall not see. It shall all be as you wish.

Olvido.—Heavens, what a man!

Leandro.—My wish is that we take advantage of this solitude, this opportunity, to discuss love.

Olvido.—Holy Mary!

Leandro.—I've said it.

Olvido.—To discuss love! . . . Do you know what you are asking of me, child? This indeed does offend me.

Leandro.—No!

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[1] Forgetfulness.

Olvido.—Yes! It offends me. And are you the one who, a few moments ago, was advising me never to lose my freedom?

Leandro.—And I emphasize that advice now: love does not enslave; what does enslave is matrimony.

Olvido.—Do not talk foolishly: that I may not lose the good opinion that I've formed of you. Matrimony is a holy institution; a lasting pact, not subject to the hazards and inconstancy of light and sensual love. What bliss! To find a companion in life to whom one can say: "Give me your hand: come with me. We will go together to the end, come what will. We will share alike both grief and joy!"

Leandro (Impressed).—Your husband must have been a very happy mortal, señora.

Olvido.—He was. And so was I.

Leandro.—How long were you married?

Olvido.—Three years.

Leandro.—And was no child left to you?

Olvido.—I never had any.

Leandro.—Are you sorry?

Olvido.—From the bottom of my heart!

Leandro.—You promised me, the other afternoon, to show me the likeness of . . .

Olvido.—Of Enrique?

Leandro.—Was his name Enrique?

Olvido.—My husband? Yes. Enrique León. You are going to see him. *(Opens a locket hanging from her breast and shows it to him, first kissing it.)* Look!

Leandro (Astonished).—Eh?

Olvido.—What?

Leandro—Enrique León?

Olvido.—Yes.

Leandro (Powerless to control himself).—This man is not Enrique León!

Olvido.—What did you say?

Leandro.—That this man is not Enrique León.

Olvido.—But have you taken leave of your senses, Leandro?

Leandro.—No, señora! Do not try to fool me! This man is not Enrique León, but Pepe Navarro, the architect! I lived with him, in Madrid, for over a year; we were together at every hour of the day! Why do you look so distressed?

Olvido.—I, Leandro? . . .

Leandro.—Yes, you; you are worried, Olvido. . . . Your color comes and goes. . . . What does this mean?

Olvido.—Ay, Dios mío!

Leandro.—What does this mean?

Olvido (Troubled).—Why this . . . this . . . Ay, Dios mío! This, too, has just come about by chance! Plague take the luck!

Leandro.—How's that? What's that you're saying? Is it really Pape Navarro?

Olvido.—I don't know what the devil his name is!

Leandro.—But didn't you assure me that he was your husband?

Olvido.—Yes, but . . . Ay, ay, ay! . . . You'll see! . . . Holy Virgin, what will you think of me! Leandro, am I in the presence of a gentleman?

Leandro.—Certainly.

Olvido.—A man of honor?

Leandro.—Of honor; of honor. My word of honor. I am a man of honor . . . who just at this moment has a very bad taste in his mouth.

Olvido.—You will not breathe a word of this to any one?

Leandro.—To no one.

Olvido.—To no one?

Leandro.—I swear to it.

Olvido.—Well then, Leandro, know the truth: I am not a widow.

Leandro (Approaching very near to her with great joy).—Are you married?

Olvido.—No, señor; I'm single. *(*LEANDRO *instinctively draws back.)* Do not run away so quickly, *hombre de Dios!*[1]

Leandro (Very much embarrassed).—No, no señora, I'm not running away. . . . What nonsense! I mean, no, *señorita,* I'm not running away. . . . The fact is I'm very much perplexed . . . utterly at a loss. . . I can't see the reason for this situation. . . . I can't, I tell you, explain to myself this assumed widowhood! N . . . now I'm more nervous than ever.

Olvido.—Just think for a moment and you will understand. . . . Aren't you the man who adores widows' eyes? The only extraordinary thing in this situation is my boldness. Listen. I have many friends in Madrid: married, spinsters, and widows.

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[1] Man of God.

The married ones are married and happy; the spinsters can't find a lover at any price; the widows are all going to be married again.

Leandro (Understanding with a certain terror).—Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. . . .

Olvido.—Are you beginning to understand the reasons for this subterfuge of mine? In Madrid my nerves were on edge; I was desperate; vainly calling for love. Our family doctor prescribed these health-giving waters. Papá could not accompany me, nor mamá. . . Then I planned this deviltry. I dressed in black, assumed a grief-stricken look of the eyes, and took the train all alone, with the intention of procuring here some young girl as a companion, who, of course, would be utterly unaware of my secret. When my brother Antonio finished his course of studies, he and his comrades had a group picture taken: I cut out the one whose appearance pleased me the most, the man with the biggest mustache, this was the one, and placed it in a locket to lend an appearance of reality to my assumed state. It even won for itself a few kisses!

Leandro.—Yes, yes, yes. . . .

Olvido.—And in the fortnight I have spent in Almarín—an inconsolable widow—I have already had more suitors than in all my years as a spinster! And so the waters have been very beneficial! *(With sudden shyness.)* See if you cannot find some excuse for what I have done. *(Returns to the bench.* Leandro *walks about, deep in thought, uneasy. Any one would think that he were trying to slip away.* Olvido *watches him. Pause.)* What's that? Are you talking to yourself?

Leandro.—Am I talking to myself? It's quite possible.

Olvido.—Well, I'm still here.

Leandro.—Oh yes, I can see you.

Olvido.—And now you can judge whether my artifice is justified or not: before finding it out, you wished to eat me up—the minute you discover I'm single, you wish to put all the ground possible between us.

Leandro.—No, certainly not, Olvido. Do not interpret things so arbitrarily. . . . The reason is that the disclosure is most unusual . . . It would disconcert a bronze statue. Give me time to pull myself together a little. . . . *(Very seriously.)* It is amusing! It is very amusing!

Olvido.—Very well, but say it with a different look on your face. No one would think now that it had amused you at all.

Leandro (Laughing nervously).—It is, it is amusing! I will have to admit, Olvido, that I have thought a great deal over this undoubted attraction that widows have for men, almost to a man! . . . What do you think is the reason for it? On what is it based?

Olvido.—Ah, my friend! There are a thousand and one reasons for it. I have analyzed them all, before deciding to . . . *to become a widow.*

Leandro (Bends toward her).—Most interesting! . . .

Olvido.—The first is, that when a man woos a widow, the rival with whom he competes is . . . under ground. He is powerless to annoy him.

Leandro.—Of course! That's so.

Olvido.—And as man, in general, is most vain, he takes delight in the supposition that up to his arrival on the scene, that woman had never experienced true love. Some men are perfect peacocks. And as the other poor fellow can't chirp! . . .

Leandro.—Ha, ha!

Olvido.—Then the instinct of self-preservation also plays a part. . . .

Leandro.—I do not understand. . . .

Olvido.—Why, it's very simple. A man thinks a woman who has out-lived one man will probably not out-live another! And he approaches her as though saying without the words: "It's your turn now." No?

Leandro.—Ha, ha! There's no lack of observation there, no.

Olvido.—Well, the man's apt to get badly left! Besides, Leandro, there are countless weapons open to the widow, that a spinster can't fence with at all! Now just what could I have expected your opinion of me to be, if I had made this date with you *as a spinster?* With all frankness.

Leandro.—Yes, yes . . . you would have seemed a little forward, to say the least.

Olvido.—On the other hand, with my widows' eyes . . .

Leandro.—It has seemed most natural . . . most natural . . . a very natural thing.

Olvido.—And what about social chit-chat? I personally, delight in injecting a little naughtiness into the conversation . . . a little spice . . .

Leandro.—Yes, eh?

Olvido.—Señor, a girl has not been brought up in a lighthouse! Why she knows a lot of things of which she has to pretend to be ignorant. Well, *as a spinster,* there's neither spice . . . nor deviltry. And, naturally, the boys take us for fools. And we are not such fools.

Leandro.—No, no; you're not a bit of a fool, no.

Olvido.—You say that because you have known me *as a widow.* And just see how absurd it is: our parents do not wish us to indulge in the slightest liberty, not even within the bounds of modesty—and afterwards they taunt us with not being attractive to men! Now why shouldn't we be attractive to them? Why we have a charmingly baited hook for men! But we might as well have it shut up in a bureau drawer!—Widows, on the other hand, can dangle their hooks openly, and season their conversation with wit, with pepper, with spice, with whatever is suited to the occasion, without being criticized for it by any one. At the most, some one will say: "Ah, how original this Mrs. So-and-so is!" A spinster who is a little forward, scares men off. "My Lord, what a girl! How she throws herself at your head!" A widow, more than fresh, attracts. What is a fault in the one, is a pleasing quality in the other. What are you thinking of?

Leandro.—Of that; of all that; of how true it all is.

Ovido.—Well, there's more still. A woman past thirty is qualified as an *old maid,* and only spiteful remarks and contemptuous expressions are applied to her. The least objectionable comment she hears is, "at the altar dressing stage." A widow at the same age is a "sugar-plum." Caramba! If the one is a bonbon, so is the other.

Leandro.—The . . . the choicest bonbon is the spinster, because . . . because she is still wrapped up in her little paper. *(*Olvido *laughs.)* That remark amused you, eh?

Olvido.—It amused me.

Leandro.—Well, I was going to say it in another, somewhat more daring, fashion; but I took into consideration that . . .

Olvido.—Yes; that I'm *now* a spinster.

Leandro.—Precisely.

Olvido.—And the all-powerful reason that induces men to be partial to widows . . .

Leandro.—I am beginning to modify my convictions, do not include me. . . .

Olvido (Looking at him beguilingly).—So soon? The supreme reason for this partiality rests on the lure, the incentive of what is forbidden. A spinster candidly says: "I wish to get married!" A widow says: "I do not wish to get married!" And she is the one whom man pursues.

Leandro.—You are extremely clever.

Olvido.—No, indeed; I just have a woman's intuition.

Leandro.—And you are a consummate actress: with what supreme art you have acted the part of a widow!

Olvido.—Well see here: I would not wish to remain a widow.

Leandro.—Nor would it please me to have you!

Olvido.—For the time-being, Leandro, as the conspiracy is out, I am but an innocent little spinster—and so I beg of you . . .

Leandro.—What?

Olvido.—It is not discreet of us to stay here and talk, all alone, any longer.

Leandro.—Why you are a widow to every one else!

Olvido.—But not to you. And now I'm beginning to value your opinion.

Leandro.—Really, Olvido?

Olvido.—I will not say that I do not know how to lie, because you wouldn't believe me.

*(*CONSUELO *returns and finds them making love on the bench, and, pleasantly surprised, she sticks out the end of her tongue. Then, contriving not to be seen, she pays great attention to the dialogue.)*

Leandro.—Very well; but just because you have unexpectedly changed your status, I will not give up talking to you . . .

Olvido.—I do not refer to that, but to our meeting under other circumstances. I now must have *(says nesesito, Andalusian pronunciation, instead of necesito, Castilian pronunciation)* a companion. . . . Nesesito! There's that Andalusian accent again. Tomorrow I'll be back here well chaperoned.

Leandro.—At this same hour?

Olvido.—Why change it?

Leandro.—Well, I shall unexpectedly run across you!

Olvido.—Perfect!

Leandro.—And now I'll leave you, seeing that you urge me to. Not to mention that I must walk, at any rate, six or seven kilometers, to feel myself again. All that changing about! Because . . . come now . . . a spinster to end up as a widow . . . no one can be surprised at that; but a widow to be metamorphosed into a spinster! . . . *Cáspita!* That's something new to me!

Olvido.—Ha, ha, ha! And you regret it?

Leandro.—How absurd!

Olvido.—Till tomorrow, then?

Leandro.—Yes, *hasta mañana.* Now didn't I say the Huerta was yours?

Olvido.—This very spot, eh?

Leandro.—This very spot.

Olvido.—And on this very bench they talk about?

Leandro.—Why not? We'll be the ones to put a stop to that yarn!

Olvido.—So far as I'm concerned . . .

Leandro.—Well, so far as I am, too! . . . *Cáspita,* how nervous I am! *Hasta mañana! (Leaves with resolute step at right, making grimaces.)*

Olvido.—*Hasta mañana. (Says good-bye to him with her little hand*[1] *and stands watching him as he goes away.)*

Consuelo.—I declare, I declare! And they said the bench! . . . Why it's just the opposite! *(Sits down as though in an easy-chair.)* Well, one thing sure is that I shan't lose any more time!

Olvido. Adois! (Pause.) He is very agreeable. And seems like a fine young fellow. Well, won't there be a train-full of widows leave Madrid, when this becomes known! *(Voicing her sentiments:)*

Hopeless little spinsters, be not fearful;
Man, however cunning and wilful,
Yields to a widow's dolorous eyes:
To her eyes *"de luto,"* and subtle sighs.

Madrid, March, 1917.

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[1] Back of the hand is held up, the palm is crooked, and the fingers are wiggled back and forth.

CHARLES LAMB, LITERARY CRITIC

BY LU EMILY PEARSON

Much has been said of women blessed with masculine minds, but no one has discoursed upon the blessings of the man with a feminine mind. It is, therefore, with no little satisfaction one discovers in a man as great as Charles Lamb, the most refined form of feminine reasoning, which, for want of a better term, may be called intuition. One of the simplest explanations for this more than perplexing term is—thinking with the heart. True, this intuition requires a peculiar kind of mental gymnastics—a sudden leap to the conclusion and a rapid analysis en route—thus involving a sprinting of the mind over two paths but toward the same point, with the heart acting as umpire. Nor is this reasoning fallacy proof, for sometimes umpires do render queer decisions, and sometimes sprinters do stumble and fall.

One of the most necessary things to remember in the study of Lamb's criticism is that like all people with thinking power, his mind was not perfected at any specific age, but grew from year to year. Now budding and flowering under the warmth of gracious friendships, now turning this way and that like an uncertain vine tossed in the breeze, he always came back to one support, one inspiration, his sister Mary. Just how much she helped to fashion his life cannot be estimated; she was the great steadying influence. And just such a friend was Coleridge. A great deal could be written about the windows that mystic opened for the quaint little clerk in his dark counting house. Suffice it to say that the friendships Charles Lamb made through the great-hearted Samuel Coleridge were of incalculable value. Nor must one forget the friendships which the little black-coated lover of the streets made among characters most men would disdain; for perhaps these, most of all, served to make him the most human, the most sympathetic of students and writers of life. Yet h of never lost a certain delicacy of feeling; he kept the bloom to

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idealism fresh and untainted, and his romantic sympathies never lost their swell and surge. These romantic qualities were so compounded in his *Rosamund Gray* that one who, having an acquaintance with only the *Essays,* takes up the booklet for the first time, feels the shock of contact with something very different from the Charles Lamb he has always known. His treatment of the women in the story recalls to mind the gentle creatures of long ago, whose simple beliefs urged them to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. No wonder the story swept Shelley into ecstacy, for to this poet, still on his fruitless quest for the ideal, it came like a fresh wind, blowing in the spring, straight from the wild wood-violets. But the sophisticated reader of to-day, after his momentary intoxication, resolutely closes the book with the feeling that here is a mawkish unworldliness, an idealism of adolescence in its first flood of dream love. To know that this story is the author's attempt to get out of the realization of misery by clinging fast to the ideals of youth (the romance was Lamb's first real attempt to pursue those literary ambitions so suddenly broken off by the tragedy of 1796) is to give the key to Lamb's whole literary career, for all he wrote—letters, plays, poems, essays—was to him an escape from the domestic tragedy of his life and the smothering monotony of office confinement.

In the study of this unique critic of literature, one can arrive at a certain point, if one will persist in arriving at all, only by following a very definite program. In so wide a field of disorganized writing, one can reach a decision regarding this man's right to his peculiar place of importance by a consideration of his qualifications for criticism, his limitations for criticism, and his contribution to criticism. Then, that the discussion may be brought to a particular consideration of his writings, one can do no better than to choose the greatest piece of literary criticism Lamb accomplished, that marvelous outpouring of his heart *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare.*

The outstanding qualification for all literary writing is saturation, and one never becomes saturated with a subject unless his interest is fed by love. Such was the case with Charles Lamb. He loved drama of the sixteenth century, and Shakespeare in particular; he was an inveterate theatre-goer; he delighted to discuss these interests of his heart far into the night with such rare companions as Coleridge, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Wordsworth, or with queer men of the streets whose morals were not of the best, and, when unable to talks to his friends, he loved to write them long letters, treating of literature old and new, but particularly of the dramatic poets of the Elizabethan period whom he called "the ancients." When a young man of about thirty-three, he made perhaps his most valuable bit of research by collecting the *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.* It is significant that in his preface of 1808 he proclaimed his purpose to be: "To show in what manner they *felt,* when they placed themselves by the power of imagination in trying situations, in the conflicts of duty and passion, or the strife of contending duties; what sort of loves and enmities theirs were; how their griefs were tempered, and their full-swoln joys abated; how much of Shakespeare shines in the great men his contemporaries, and how far in his mind and manners he surpassed them and all mankind." Ten years later Lamb collected and revised the notes he had published in this anthology of Elizabethan drama, and in the preface to this work he again stated his preference for "the kind of extracts . . . not so much passages of wit and humor, though the old plays were rich in such, as *scenes* of passion, sometimes of the deepest quality, interesting situations, serious descriptions, that which is more nearly allied to poetry than to wit, and to tragic rather than to comic poetry. The plays which I made choice of were, with few exceptions, such as treat of human life and manners, rather than masques and Arcadian pastorals." Then followed a repetition of his statement in the preface of 1808. An excellent example of his idea of dialogue containing reality and life is found in his notes about Cyril Tourneur's *Revenger's Tragedy.* The dialogue in which Vindici and Hippolito tempted their mother and then threatened her with death for consenting to the dishonor of their sister "passed any scenical illusion" he had ever felt. Whenever he read it, it caused his "ears to tingle" and he felt a "hot blush overspread his cheeks" as if he were one of the unfortunate brothers who spoke "in words more keen and dagger-like than those which Hamlet speaks to his mother." With such intensity of spirit did Lamb enter into the plays he collected for others to enjoy. Nor did he ever tire of this love for Elizabethan literature. After his retirement, when making extracts from the Garrick collection of plays at the British museum for Hone's *Table Book,* he wrote to the editor, "Imagine the luxury to one like me, who above every other form of Poetry, have ever preferred the Dramatic, of sitting in the princely apartments, and culling at will the flower of some thousand Dramas." So saturated was Lamb with these Eizabethans that when he attempted to write a play of his own, *John Woodvil,* he did little else than to recollect for the speeches of his characters the gems stored away in his mind, and no doubt he almost felt he had invented them. He was only about twenty-three when he wrote this "masterpiece," but in view of the fact that in this he loved not with discretion, we forgive him and look to the wise fruits of that love.

First, then, one must consider Lamb's delicate appreciation, his depth of insight, his "intuitive intimacy of touch," which seemed to make him *part* of that over which he mused. Quick to feel the ecstasy of lofty thought and expression, he was especially sensitive to passages pregnant in suggestion. Indeed, his faculty for divining meanings and for apprehending the beauties in the dreams he hung over with such delight is incomparable. He felt that literature consisted of all writing in which was embodied the secret of life, and whatever that secret was to others, to him it was emotional and had its being in the intellect of the heart. Thus it was that Lamb, like Longinus, was concerned with the effect of transport, and in a rapid turn of the mind felt and analyzed the catharsis of the soul before an Aristotelian could have been sure there was catharsis present. Such flashes of thought are responsible for most of the gold in Lamb's critical writing, and that he was conscious of it there is no doubt. In a letter to Southey, November 8, 1798, he makes this statement concerning Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner:*

> . . . I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in the part,
>
> A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware.
>
> It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings.

By what might at first seem to be direct contrast to this method of feeling his way into criticism, Lamb has swept aside all doubts concerning the part the mind must play in such a performance, in his essay on the *Sanity of True Genius,* published in

The Last Essays of Elia in 1826. He is concerned with creative genius in his discourse, but since genuine criticism is also creative, the gold in this essay reflects the quality of Lamb's mind. He says:

> It is impossible for the mind to conceive of a mad Shakespeare. The greatness of wit, by which the poetic talent is here chiefly to be understood, manifests itself in the admirable balance of all the faculties. Madness is the disproportionate straining or excess of any one of them. . . . The ground of the mistake is, that men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their own experience, besides the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it. In the groves of Eden he walks familiar as in his native paths. He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated. He treads the burning marl without dismay; he wins his flight without self-loss through realms of chaos "and old night." Or, if, abandoning himself to that severer chaos of a "human mind untuned," he is content awhile to be mad with Lear . . . —never letting the reins of reason wholly go, while most he seems to do so,—he has his better genius still whispering at his ear, with the good servant Kent suggesting saner counsels. . . . Where he seems most to recede from humanity, he will be found the truest to it.

As can be readily seen, only a mind blessed with a sensitive imagination could put itself in such harmony with the object of its loving analysis. Nor is it strange, when one stops to think of it, that in the *Tales from Shakespeare,* Lamb's account of the tragedies contains some of his best criticism. How well he sums the whole tragic situation of Romeo and Juliet when he says briefly, "So did these poor old lords, when it was too late, strive to outgo each other in mutual courtesies." Of Lear, at the banishment of Kent, he says the king is "like a frantic patient" who "kills the physician, and loves his mortal disease." Tenderly he speaks of Desdemona: ". . . so was her heart subdued to an implicit devotion to the man she had selected for a husband, that his very color, which to all but this discerning lady would have proved as insurmountable objection, was by her esteemed above all white skins." "Iago," he says, "was artful, and had studied human nature deeply, and he knew that of all the torments which afflict the mind of men (and far beyond all bodily torture), the pains of jealousy were the most intolerable, and had the sorest sting." In Hamlet's character his criticism is particularly searching, for he touches the very heart of the prince's agony when he says, ". . . being of a nice sense of honor, and a most exquisite practiser of propriety himself, did sorely take to heart this unworthy conduct of his mother." It was Lamb who first explained satisfactorily the irresolution of Hamlet's character, and his explanation, which has served to provide some brilliant dissertations on the subject, is as follows: "The mere act of putting a fellow creature to death was in itself odious and terrible to a disposition naturally so gentle as Hamlet's was. His very melancholy, and the dejection of spirits he had so long been in, produced an irresoluteness and wavering of purpose, which kept him from proceeding to extremities." Today there is a tendency to stress the agony of the prince over his mother's conduct, and to present Hamlet as a brave hero who did not flinch at murder when he thought he heard the king in his mother's apartment. Only time will prove the truth of Lamb's criticisms about Hamlet and the rest of these tragic characters. That there is preaching is only too apparent; nevertheless it is beautiful preaching, and one reads with pleasure the grave admonition at the end of the preface, "What these tales have been to the *young* readers, that and much more it is the writer's wish that the true Plays of Shakespeare may prove to them in older years—enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honorable thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples, teaching these virtues, his pages are full." And so back we come to the principle of catharsis.

Lamb's interest in catharsis was, of course, due to the intensity of his feeling and to his sympathetic attitude toward weakness in humanity, a toleration which was at once "so wide and so wise" that no one within the radius of his personality could fail to recognize its warmth and strength. This toleration, especially in an Englishman, is rare, and in Lamb's case, gushed from the heart of a humorist. The quality which differentiates a humor like Lamb's from all other humor has its beginning in a tragedy which centers in the affections. An excellent definition of this type of humorist is: ". . . one who, having suffered, has assimilated sorrow and transformed it, if not into gaiety, into an enduring kindness of heart; or who through bitterness and tragedy has come to himself in all senses, and now stands before you trying to forget it."

One who traces Lamb's development from *Rosamund Gray* through the essays and letters is struck by the widening of his attitude toward life. An example of his appreciation of a sane balance between the comedy and tragedy of life is shown in an essay he wrote about 1822 when he was in the full maturity of mind and spirit. In this discussion of *Restoration Comedy,* his criticism of the moral test is so well taken one can do no better than to present excerpts from it:

> Idle gallantry in a fiction, a dream, the passing pageant of an evening, startles us in the same way as the alarming indications of profligacy in a son or ward in real life should startle a parent or guardian. We have no such middle emotions as dramatic interests left. . . . We are spectators to a plot or intrigue (not reducible in life to the point of strict morality) and take it all for truth. We substitute a real for a dramatic person, and judge him accordingly. . . . We have been spoiled with . . . the exclusive and all devouring drama of common life; where the moral point is everything; where, instead of the fictitious half-believed personages of the stage (the phantoms of old comedy) we recognize ourselves, our brothers, aunts, kinsfolk, allies, patrons, enemies,—the same as in life,—with an interest in what is going on so hearty and substantial, that we cannot afford our moral judgment, in its deepest and most vital results, to compromise or slumber for a moment. . . . We carry our fire-side concerns to the theatre with us. We do not go thither, like our ancestors, to escape from the presence of reality, so much as to conform our experience to it; to make assurance double, and take a bond of fate. We must live our toilsome lives twice over, as it was the mournful privilege of Ulysses to descend twice to the shades. . . . The privileges of the place are taken away by law. We dare not dally with images, or names of wrong. We bark like foolish dogs at shadows. We dread infection from the scenic representation of disorder; and fear a painted pustule. In our anxiety that our morality should not take cold, we wrap it up in a great blanket surtout of precaution against the breeze of sunshine.
>
> I confess for myself that (with no great delinquencies to answer for) I am glad for a season to take an airing beyond the diocese of the strict conscience,—not to live always in the precincts of the law-courts,—but now and then, for a dream-while

> or so, to imagine a world with no meddling restrictions—to get into recesses, whither the hunter cannot follow me— . . . I come back to my cage and my restraint the fresher and more healthy for it. I wear my shackles more contentedly for having respired the breath of an imaginary freedom.

Continuing this discussion of obtruding the moral point into our comedies, he says:

> The whole is a passing pageant, where we should sit as unconcerned at the issues, for life or death, as at a battle of the frogs and mice. But, like Don Quixote, we take part against the puppets, and quite as impertinently. We dare not contemplate an Atlantis, a scheme, out of which our coxcombical moral sense is for a little transitory ease excluded. We have not the courage to imagine a state of things for which there is neither reward nor punishment. We cling to the painful necessities of shame and blame. We would indict our very dreams.

In view of such criticism, then, one is justified in making the statement that Lamb does think. And no one *but* a humorist could have set forth with such niceness the function of comedy. Because of his fresh insight into literature, one can read with confidence what he has to say about tragedies and poetry, for his analysis involves the keenest perception of catharsis, or transport, or both.

Not the least of Lamb's qualifications for criticism was his sincerity. He looked straight; he discerned afresh; he was neither embarrassed by his former remarks nor biased by opinions of others, and was thus able to get close to the thinking and personality of his beloved author. Such sincerity manifested itself from the first. In a letter to Coleridge on November 8, 1796, he urged his friend to cultivate simplicity, or rather to banish elaborateness, "for," he continued, "simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into daylight its own modest buds, and genuine, sweet and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot-beds in the gardens of Parnassus." An excellent example of such sincere criticism is his defence of Richard III. He was the first critic to find anything beautiful in the character, and while his discovery was due to his sensitive appreciation of the poetry in the speeches of that villain, still he has made for him a strong defence. In 1801, in a letter to Robert Lloyd, he wrote:

> I am possessed with an admiration of the genuine Richard, his genius, and his mounting spirit, which no consideration of his cruelties can depress. Shakespeare has not made Richard so black a monster as is supposed. Wherever he is monstrous, it was to conform to vulgar opinion. But he is generally a man. Read his most exquisite address to the widowed Queen to court her daughter for him—the topics of maternal feeling, of a deep knowledge of the heart, are such as no monster could have supplied. Richard must have *felt* before he could feign so well; though ambition choked the good seed. I think it the most finished piece of eloquence in the world; of persuasive oratory far above Demosthenes, Burke, or any man, far exceeding the courtship of Lady Anne. . . . All the inconsistency is that Shakespeare's better genius was forced to struggle against the prejudices which made a monster of Richard. He set out to paint a *monster,* but his human sympathies produced a *man.*

Lamb never came nearer the truth. In this letter he has put his finger on the cause for the wide difference of opinion about Richard's character. In the same manner was Shakespeare deflected from his course when drawing the character of Shylock. He started out to present the Jew as a comic character to appeal to his audience, which considered Jews the best butt for comedy, but as with Richard III, Shakespeare's human sympathies took possession and made Shylock a *man.* A year after writing this letter to Lloyd, Lamb witnessed a performance of Richard III by the actor, G. F. Cooke, and in a most indignant manner, criticised the production. The sincerity in his disapproval fairly sparkles:

> We are ready to acknowledge, that this actor presents us with a very original and very forcible portrait (if not of the *man* Richard, whom Shakespeare drew, yet of the *monster* Richard, as he exists in the *popular idea*), *in his own exaggerated* and *witty self-abuse,* in the over-strained representations of the parties who were *sufferers* by his *ambition;* and above all, in the impertinent and wretched *scenes,* so absurdly foisted in by some, who have thought themselves capable of adding to what *Shakespeare wrote.*
>
> But of Mr. Cooke's Richard:
>
> First.—His *predominant and masterly simulation.* He has a tongue that can wheedle with the Devil. It has been the policy of that ancient and grey simulator, in all ages, to hide his *horns and claws.* The *Richard* of Mr. Cooke perpetually obtrudes *his.*
>
> Secondly.—His *habitual jocularity,* the effect of buoyant spirits, and an elastic mind, rejoicing in his own powers, and in

> the success of his machinations. This quality of unrestrained mirth accompanies *Richard,* and is a prime feature in his character. It never leaves him; in plots, in stratagems, and in the midst of his bloody devices, it is perpetually driving him upon wit, and jests, and personal satire, fanciful illusions, and quaint felicities of phrase. . . . This character of unlabored mirth Mr. Cooke seems entirely to pass over, and substitutes in its stead the coarse, taunting humor, and clumsy merriment, of a low-minded assassin.
>
> Thirdly.—His *personal deformity.* When the *Richard* of Mr. Cooke makes allusions to his own *form,* they seem accompanied with *unmixed distaste* and *pain,* like some obtrusive and *haunting* idea— But surely the *Richard* of Shakespeare mingles in these allusions a perpetual reference to his own powers and capacities, by which he is enabled to surmount these petty objections; and the joy of a defect *conquered,* or *turned* into an advantage, is one cause of these very allusions, and of the satisfactions, with which his mind recurs to them. . . . The most bitter of them are to be found in his self-congratulating soliloquy spoken in the very moment and crisis of joyful exultation on the success of his unheard of courtship.

That *Richard* was a captivating discovery to Lamb is shown by his frequent reference to it. In the essay on *Tragedies,* written about 1811, he defended his accusation that Garrick lacked genuine admiration for Shakespeare, by saying, "I believe it impossible that he could have had a proper reverence for Shakespeare, and have condescended to go through that interpolated scene in Richard III, in which Richard tries to break his wife's heart by telling her he loves another woman, and says, 'if she survives this she is immortal.' Yet I doubt not be delivered this vulgar stuff with as much anxiety of emphasis as any of the genuine parts." Again, in 1827, in *Notes* to *Extracts* from *Garrick's Plays,* he says, "Without a soul of goodness in himself, how could Shakespeare's *Richard the Third* have lit upon those sweet phrases and inducements by which he attempts to win over the dowager queen to let him wed her daughter. It is not nature's nature, but imagination's substituted nature, which does almost as well in a fiction." This is, of course, a definite adherence to the Aristotelian law of imitation, and although Lamb's criticism here is not as explicit as we might wish, he does make a definite plea for the true genius of Shakespeare—a genius which was concerned with poetic characterizations, rather than with plots, characterizations which were true representations, in most instances, or the bodying forth of the idea in the artist's mind, in spite of the man's attempt to fit the idea to history. Through his saturation with his subject, his delicate insight into his subject, his ability to get into close contact with the thought and personality of the author, and finally, through his sincerity of expression, Lamb was, in his day as he is now, an inspiration to all who read him. With that saturation, that wide reading in the works of those he discussed, he had genuine intellectual qualities to make his study valuable; with that delicate insight, he was given a fine discernment of the best in an author's art; with his ability to come close to both author and work, he had wide sympathy for all the people who together make life what it is, and out of the sincerity of his heart, he was able to form judgments of depth and of truth. But even as he loved mankind, not so much in spite of as because of, his shortcomings, so also do we love Lamb's critical mind because of its very limitations. Without those little twists that prevented him from giving us historical criticism in the full sense of the term, he would have been utterly unable to be the critic he was.

His inability to grasp a comprehensive view of life or literature was Lamb's greatest weakness. His life with its immediate environment of tragedy and of golden friendships, and the spirit of the age in which he lived were not without their influence upon him. For Charles Lamb existence was too fateful, too surely uncertain, too fraught with sorrow and horror, too surprising in its revelations of the great hearts and minds with which he came into contact, too startling in its sudden shift from joy to grief, to reconciliation, to give him time or temper in which to try to answer the questions of the meaning of life, of the nature of man, or of the destiny of the world. Nor did he fail to respond to the spirit of his age. He lived in a time when "the streak in the tulip" was of more importance than the tulip, and so he filled his heart with the particular things of life: dear comrades, old places and old books, well-thumbed pages of the finest passages of "the ancients," but especially did he cling to those human relationships which depend not upon the intellect but upon sympathy. He had no interest in the analysis of dramatic construction because he could not grasp the principles of it. When he was about fifty-two, he wrote to Mrs. Shelley: "I can do the dialogue, but not the damned plot." He never cared to bother his head about problems of authorship, or text, or date. He merely took what he found and examined *that* for what it gave him. In a letter to editor Hone, while working on extracts from Garrick's plays, he wrote: "You must be content with sometimes a scene, sometimes a song; a speech or a passage or a poetical image, as they happen to strike me. I read without order of time; I am a poor hand at dates; and for any biography of the Dramatists, I must refer to writers who are more skillful in such matters. My business is with their poetry only." In his essays of Elia in 1821, under the title of *Imperfect Sympathies,* Lamb, better than anyone else, describes this peculiarity of his mind:

> There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. . . . Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath. . . . They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err by attempting it. Their minds, as I have said before, are suggestive merely.

Small wonder, then, that Lamb should fail to comprehend the *nature* of drama, that its inner character, the central strength, the vital element in the process of its making—all contribute to a form of art that is to be *acted.* As he said, his business was with the *poetry only,* and *Lamb never thought of drama except as poetry.* At the same time, this attitude toward drama, this limitation, often enabled him to go straight to the heart of a play. Cordelia's death, which in learned, comprehensive minds has given rise to an endless discussion about poetic justice, is beautifully justified by Lamb in the simple statement: ". . . it is an awful truth, that innocence and piety are not always successful in *this* world."

What, then, is Lamb's contribution to literary criticism? First of all is the fact that he brought from obscurity the contemporary dramatists of Shakespeare. In 1808, when Lamb produced his *Specimens,* the names of Ford, Webster, Tourneur, Dekker, Chapman, and others were practically unknown. Jonson, alone, stood out by the side of Shakespeare, and Massinger and Beaumont and Fletcher were known to a very select company indeed. Without doubt Lamb's excellent anthology was responsible for turning both Hazlitt and Coleridge to their fruitful studies of Elizabethan drama. The honest criticism, altogether delightful and illuminating, supplemented by notes which even to-day are quoted as "almost scriptural truths," serves as a foundation for much that is still practical in research. Thus does he comment on Christopher Marlowe's *Rich Jew of Malta:*

> Marlowe's Jew does not approach so near to Shakespeare's, as his *Edward the Second* does to *Richard the Second.* Barabas is a mere monster brought in with a large pointed nose to please the rabble. He kills in sport, poisons whole nunneries, invents infernal machines. He is just such an exhibition as a century or two earlier might have played before the Londoners "by the royal command," when a general pillage and massacre of the Hebrews had been previously resolved on in the cabinet. It is curious to see a superstition wearing out. The idea of a Jew, which our pious ancestors contemplated with so much horror, has nothing in it now revolting. We have tamed the claws of the beast, and pared its nails, and now we take it to our arms, fondle it, write plays to it, flatter it; it is visited by princes, affects a taste, patronizes the arts, and is the only liberal and gentlemanlike thing in Christendom.

Certainly, more than any other of his time, Charles Lamb was responsible for the turning back of literary thought into the channels of the Elizabethans, out of which came forth a new stream of literary thought and feeling—the full-flowing love for individual expression.

Closely related to this study of Elizabethans was Lamb's method of criticising. Even the judgments of his friends were not exempt from his censure if he found cause to disagree with them. In a rather long essay of 1823 on *Some Sonnets* of Sir Philip Sydney, is a most delicious comment on Hazlitt's treatment of the gentle poet. "I have dwelt the longer upon what I conceive the merit of these poems, because I have been hurt by the wantonness (I wish I could treat it by a gentler name) with which W. H. takes every occasion of insulting the memory of Sir Philip Sidney." The appeal of this poet to Lamb was probably through his gracious mind rather than through his poems. "In the sweetly constituted mind of Sir Philip Sidney," Lamb said, "it seems as if no ugly thought or unhandsome meditation could find a harbor. He twined all that he touched into images of honor and virtue." In this same comment, which deals with *Francis Beaumont* and *John Fletcher* in his *Dramatic Writers Contemporary with Shakespeare,* he makes this note: "One characteristic of the excellence of old poets is, their being able to bestow grace upon subjects which naturally do not seem susceptible of any. I will mention two instances. Zelmane in the *Arcadia* of Sidney, and Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well* of Shakespeare." He compares the graceful treatment by these two poets of a subject that in itself is anything but graceful, and then proceeds to a comparison of the heroines with Aspatia, in the *Maid's Tragedy.* His concluding statement is of interest: "After all, Beaumont and Fletcher were but an inferior sort of Shakespeares and Sidneys." Too much heart enters this judgment, honest though it is, when he would place Sidney by the *side* of Shakespeare. A far more valuable comparison is in the study of *Thierry and Theodoret:*

> Yet noble as the whole passage is, it must be confessed that the manner of it, compared with Shakespeare's finest scenes, is faint and languid. Its motion is circular, not progressive. Each line resolves on itself in a sort of separate orbit. They do not join into one another like a running hand. Fletcher's ideas move slow; his versification, though sweet, is tedious; it stops at every turn; he lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately, that we see their junctures. Shakespeare mingles everything, runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure. . . . He (Fletcher) seems to have thought that nothing great could be produced in an ordinary way. The chief incidents in some of his most admired tragedies show this. Shakespeare had nothing of this contortion in his mind, none of that craving after violent situations, and flights of strained and improbable virtue, which I think always betrays an imperfect moral sensibility. The wit of Fletcher is excellent like his serious scenes, but there is something strained and far-fetched in both. He is too mistrustful of Nature, he always goes a little on one side of her. Shakespeare chose her

> without reserve; and had riches, power, understanding, and length of days, with her, for a dowry.

Lamb's reading was not always in one circle, however. One brief sentence tells his idea of Gibbon's style. "None of the cursed Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite!" How many would dare such honest criticism as this! In a letter to Robert Lloyd, April 6th, 1801, he comments thus on the writing of Jeremy Taylor:

> [He] has more beautiful imagery, and [what is more to a lover of Willy] [Shakespeare probably] more knowledge and description of human life and manners than any prose book in the language: he has more delicacy and sweetness than any mortal, the "gentle" Shakespeare hardly excepted,—his similes and allusions are taken, as the bees take their honey, from all the youngest, greenest, exquisitest parts of nature, from plants, and flowers, and fruit, young boys and virgins, from little children perpetually, from sucking infants, babies' smiles, roses, garden,—his imagination was a spacious garden, where no vile insects could crawl in.

Writing to Coleridge, December 5th, 1796, Lamb says: "I have been reading *The Task* with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton; but I would not call that man my friend who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.'" The next five years brought him the sad realization that Cowper was "divine" only in his "chit-chat." With the old boyish enthusiasm, but this time for a new writer, we find him writing to Coleridge about Chapman's *Homer*. "Did you ever read it? It has the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, more than any; and in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em. The metre is fourteen syllables, and capable of all sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you at his own free pace." Here he quotes a delightful example of a simile describing the bees and "their egression." Lamb concludes with, "What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands!" In a letter some time later, written to C. A. Elton, he again expresses his admiration for Chapman's *Homer*. "I shall die in the belief that he has improved upon Homer, in the Odyssey in particular."

It is refreshing to find Lamb interested in DeFoe's novels. In a letter to Walter Wilson, December 16th, 1822, he writes:

> In the appearance of *truth,* in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them, they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The author never appears in these self-narratives, (for so they ought to be called, or rather autobiographies,) but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in everything he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. . . . His style is everywhere beautiful, but plain and *homely.* Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to lower conditions of readers. . . . The beginning of Colonel Jack is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn.

Not long before his death, Lamb wrote his *Estimate of DeFoe's Secondary Novels.* The criticism he advanced is still quoted by students of these novels. "His fictions have all the air of true stories," he writes. "It is impossible to believe, while you are reading them, that a real person is not narrating to you everywhere nothing but what really happened to himself. To this the extreme *homeliness* of their style mainly contributes. We use the word in its best and heartiest sense—that which comes *home* to the reader." Such criticism is valuable for its freshness and sturdy honesty.

All will admit that fine criticism is often a prose poem. One such passage from Lamb's work which burns with the same fire that gave it birth, and which, in its "nobility, high seriousness, and passionate emphasis," moves its reader to a keen realization of its beauty and strength, is in the essay *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare.* Here the writer is at his best.

He begins the essay with a sharp criticism of Garrick. Because of his almost constant attendance at the theatre, Lamb was peculiarly able to judge the various presentations of Shakespeare's plays. It was only natural for him to become attracted to actors and to follow their careers with an avid interest. Perhaps he grieved not a little over having missed Garrick, just as you or I have mourned having missed the Booth and Irving of our father's time. Thus there may be those who would consider the use of the quotation from the inscription under the "whole length" figure of Garrick as a device on the author's part to rouse his reader's interest, but there is more than the writer's artistry in this incident. Lamb was not unaware of Garrick's attitude toward the theatre—that of the good business man who would not hesitate to exalt himself by climbing on the shoulders of a Shakespeare. However, there is no doubt about the warmth with which Lamb uses his device to spurn the contention that a successful interpreter of Shakespeare has a mind congenial with the poet, and no doubt he exaggerates his indignation a bit to enable him to steer sharply to his point regarding *the danger of identifying the actor with the character.*

There is some reason for Lamb's attitude here, especially if one remembers how the thoughtless pleasure seeker will confuse the thought of an actor's mind with that of the dramatist's. How many college students to-day have actually disassociated Warfield from Shylock, or Mantell from Lear? Of course the only comfort to the lover of Shakespeare, when he reviews this ready acceptance of the ideas of another by the general public and even by college students, is that they do drink in the thought of others instead of going without any at all. It is only too true that for the mass, the actors of to-day do not leave Shakespeare's ideas, but their own flesh and blood standards. Since neither Lamb nor Shakespeare can appeal directly to such minds, is it fair to deal only with those minds? Even for the student, who will declare that each actor's interpretation of Shakespeare is not a real gain? By the conflict of minds is each mind enriched; by the rejection or acceptance of this or that actor's portrayal of a character, is the thoughtful student able to add to his original conception. And even the careful reader will overlook certain passages of Shakespeare till an actor brings out the beauty and power of the lines. Such a passage Lamb points out in a fragment of *Table Talk.* Lear's mind and heart are breaking under the grief from Cordelia's death. Kent, the loyal, enters.

> *Lear.*—Who are you?
> Mine eyes are none o' the best. I'll tell you straight.
> Are you not Kent?
> *Kent.*—The same; your servant, Kent.
> Where is your servant, Caius?
> *Lear.*—He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
> He'd strike, and quickly too; he's dead and rotten.

> *Kent.*—No, my good Lord; I am the very man—
> *Lear.*—I'll see that straight—
> *Kent.*—That from your first difference and decay,
> Have followed your sad steps.
> *Lear.*—You are welcome hither.
> *Albany.*—He knows not what he says; and vain it is
> That we present us to him.
> *Edgar.*—Look up, my Lord.
> *Kent.*—Vex not his ghost. Oh, let him pass! He hates him
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer.

Lamb's criticism of this scene is very fine.

> So ends *King Lear,* the most stupendous of the Shakespearian dramas; and Kent, the noblest feature of the conceptions of his divine mind. This is the magnanimity of authorship, when a writer, having a topic presented to him, fruitful of beauties for common minds, waives his privilege and trusts to the judicious few for understanding the reason of his abstinence. What a pudder would a common dramatist have raised here of a reconciliation scene, a perfect recognition, between the assumed Caius and his master! To the suffusing of many fair eyes, and the moistening of cambric handkerchiefs. The old dying king partially catching at the truth, and immediately lapsing into obliviousness, with the high-minded carelessness of the other to have his services appreciated, as one that
>
> served not for gain
> Or followed out of form
>
> are among the most judicious, not to say heart-touching strokes in Shakespeare.

Remembering, then, that Lamb's interest in the tragedies lies in their *poetry* and not in their *action,* one can see why he objected so strongly to the presentation of these works upon the stage. Nor must one forget that in his time rhetoric and declamation were arts in themselves not to be neglected in acting, and the stage business, by-play, scenery, dress, etc., were often very crude. But his contention that the poor presentation of one of the great tragedies brought it down to the level of ordinary plays is one of his exaggerations.

> I see no reason, he says, to think that if the play of Hamlet were written over again by some such writer . . ., retaining the process of the story, but totally omitting all the poetry of it, all the divine features of Shakespeare, his stupendous intellect; and

> only taking care to give us enough of passionate dialogue . . . I see not how the effect could be much different upon the audience, nor how the actor has it in his power to represent Shakespeare to us differently from his representation of Banks or Lillo. Hamlet would still be a youthful accomplished prince, and must be gracefully personated; he might be puzzled in his mind, wavering in his conduct, seemingly-cruel to Ophelia, he might see a ghost, and start at it, and address it kindly when he found it to be his father; all this in the poorest and most homely language of the servilest creeper after nature that ever consulted the palate of an audience; without troubling Shakespeare for the matter: and I see not but there would be room for all the power which an actor has, to display himself.

Curiously enough, some thirty years after Lamb wrote this, Ducis translated *Hamlet,* adapting it to suit the French traditions of drama. He included all the melodramatic elements in character and story in a rude sort of way, omitting religiously what he considered Shakespeare's ludicrous extravagances. Ducis was right enough in reshaping *Hamlet* for the French stage; but according to the English mind he did a ghastly thing. All the deep philosophy and the many sides of character familiarized to us by tradition and constant repetition, so incomprehensible to the French, were changed by a concrete, realistic, condensed treatment. Ducis's *Hamlet* seems to us, as Percy Fitzgerald says, "a sort of Byron, morbidly brooding on his wrongs." Ducis's lines, rendered with the passion of a fine actor, do take on power, and give one an echo from the great poet, but even at their best are no more than an echo. True, the "fine vision" of Shakespeare, the poetry that can be appreciated only by one in tune with the great mind, is too often slurred over on the stage. But, again, we must remember the plays were written to be *acted,* for few souls are born with Lamb's susceptible imagination with which to grasp, unaided, the beauties of Shakespeare's genius.

Strange, indeed, have been the moods and purposes attributed to Shakespeare's plays by German and even English and American critics, but Lamb, with his uncanny ability to get close to the heart of both master and work, came to the profoundest realization of the genius reflected in the great heroes when he said, "The truth is, the characters of Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters,—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago,—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap those moral fences."

The charm of any poetic criticism is not only in the pleasure it gives, but also in the result it achieves. Lamb's criticism, more than almost any other, makes one eager to read that which he criticises. This alone would place him high among literary critics. That fine prose poem which is the center of the essay *On the Tragedies,* in its rich allusion and passionate mood, in its mighty ebb and flow, tosses the soul as if it were but an atom in the mighty surge of the emotion of all humanity:

> So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. . . . But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horror of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon the stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is the mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it . . . while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reasoning . . . exerting his powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identifications of his age with that of the *heavens themselves,* when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that 'they themselves are old.' What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; . . . Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us

with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over his misused station,—as if at his years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die.

CLOSE TO THE WIND[1]

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY ELEANOR BARNES

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PRISCILLA, *age 10*
BLAKE, *age 12*
MRS. JOHNSON

SCENE: *Sitting room of a New England farm house. A what-not in the corner is decked with a conch shell and bric-a-brac; the "patent" rockers and stiff sofa are upholstered with brownish plush; the large oval center table is hidden by a drooping chenille cover with fringe, and its principal ornament, of course, is a huge family Bible. There should be a "parlor" stove—cylindrical, with nickel scroll work. On one wall is a framed funeral wreath. On another is a marine view with shell frame, draped with Florida moss. On the floor left is a large jardinière filled with dried hydrangea blossoms. A stairway back left leads to a low landing, where it turns out of sight. A door back center leads to a bed-room which every New England farm house has on the ground floor "in case anything should happen." It has happened in this household. The father has been sick for four days.*

TIME: *About six o'clock, a cold January morning. It is dark.*

AT RISE: *The stage is in darkness. The wind can be heard whistling, but not too noisily. A faint light is seen up the stairway. It gradually comes nearer and grows stronger until* PRISCILLA *appears on the landing carrying a kerosene lamp. She holds one hand near the top of the chimney to shield the flickering flame from the draught as she moves. She is wearing a long pink flannelette nightie and her hair hangs over her shoulders in two pigtails. She is a quaint wholesome child with a thoroughly*

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[1] All dramatic rights reserved by the author. For permission to perform apply to her at Marlboro, Mass.

scrubbed appearance. She looks about her breathlessly and listens intently at each step. When she finally reaches the bottom, she starts at a noise from right. BLAKE *enters from door right. He is a lanky youngster who gives the impression of having grown so fast that he doesn't yet know what to do with his newly acquired length of arms and legs. He is wearing striped flannel pajamas too small for him. When* PRISCILLA *sees him, she is so startled that she nearly drops the lamp.* BLAKE *takes it from her and puts it on the family Bible.*

Priscilla.—Mercy sakes, Blake, you scared me.

Blake.—What *you* doin' here?

Priscilla.—What you doin' yourself?

Blake.—I ast you first.

Priscilla.—I come to see Father in there. *(Points to door center back.)*

Blake.—You can't see him unless the nurse says so.

Priscilla.—Mebbe I can.

Blake.—You dassent unless the nurse—

Priscilla.—What *you* come for?

Blake.—I was just thinkin'.

Priscilla.—So wasn't I.

Blake.—What you thinkin' about?

Priscilla.—What the doctor said after supper.

Blake (Leading PRISCILLA *down left).*—'Bout him? *(Pointing to the door.)*

Priscilla.—M h'm.

Blake.—So wasn't I, P'sill.

Priscilla.—What 'd he mean, Blake?

Blake.—'Bout what?

Priscilla.—What he said—that Father was sailin' pretty close to the wind?

Blake (With superior wisdom, stuffing his hands in his pockets).—Aw, you wouldn't understand. That's 'bout boats.

Priscilla.—But he said it 'bout Father.

Blake (Shaking his head wisely).—Yep—said he was sailin' pretty close to the wind.

*(*BLAKE *stands pensively, fingering paper weight on center table.* PRISCILLA *sits left.)*

Priscilla.—Blake, I'm scaret.

Blake.—What of?

Priscilla.—Dunno, but I'm scaret.

Blake (With impatient gesture).—Well, don't talk so loud. *(Kicks at hassock.)*

Priscilla.—Le's go ask Father. *(Rises.)*

Blake.—Ask what?

Priscilla.—Ask him what's sailin' pretty close to the wind.

Blake.—I thought o' that.

Priscilla.—That's why I come down.

Blake.—So didn't I.

Priscilla.—Le's never mind the nurse.

Blake.—Mebbe she's in there.

Priscilla.—No, she's abed.

Blake.—You sure?

Priscilla.—M h'm. I saw her in her room—her dark hair on the piller.

Blake.—But they was two of 'em.

Priscilla.—*Two* nurses?

Blake.—Yeah. Doctor Horton brought another one down from town last night. You was abed. I was up later'n you.

Priscilla.—They was only one abed when I looked. Mebbe the other's in there.

Blake.—Mebbe. She'd oughter come out soon. They was both runnin' around lively enough last night with poultusses.

Priscilla.—What's those?

Blake.—Breakfast food on a cloth. It's for ammonia.

Priscilla.—What Father's got?

Blake.—Plural ammonia.

Priscilla.—Has he got more'n one?

Blake.—That's what I said—plural.

Priscilla.—Mebbe he's got one in each lung.

Blake (Impatiently).—Of course, silly, what else? Plural ammonia.

Priscilla.—How'd you know?

Blake (Looking about and lowering voice slightly).—Doctor Horton told Grampa—I heard him.

Priscilla.—Why didn't he tell us?

Blake.—Aw, you know why, P'sill. They think we don't know nothin'. Don't you remember when Mums died?

Priscilla.—M h'm.

Blake.—How they all said we was "too young to realize?"

Priscilla.—M h'm—just because we didn't do our cryin' before folks.

Blake (In disgust).—They make me sick. *(Kicks hassock and walks over right.)*

Priscilla.—Me too.

(The lamp sputters. PRISCILLA *manipulates the wick up and down, giving temporary relief.)*

Priscilla.—Needs trimmin'.

Blake.—An' fillin'.

Priscilla.—Nobody's had time since Father's been sick. Wonder how long it'll be.

Blake.—What'll be?

Priscilla.—Him awful sick like this.

Blake.—Le's ask him.

*(*PRISCILLA *starts towards the door, but hears a noise and becomes startled.)*

Blake.—That's nothin'. That's the boughs on the elm tree blowin' against the house.

Priscilla.—It scaret me.

Blake.—If you're so scaret, you better go back to bed.

Priscilla.—I ain't so scaret.

Blake.—Mebbe we'd oughter blow out the light. Someone might come.

Priscilla.—What do we care? Nobody'll touch us with Father sick in there.

*(*BLAKE *goes towards the door, but pauses thoughtfully. It wouldn't do to let his little sister know that he is scaret too.)*

Blake.—Le's set a while.

*(*BLAKE *comes down and sits on the floor in front of the table—*PRISCILLA *on a hassock close to him.)*

Priscilla.—Today's Sund'y.

Blake.—Guess we won't go to church.

Priscilla.—I had the Golden Text all learned.

Blake.—Guess you won't get 'ny gold star for it this week.

Priscilla.—I wasn't thinkin' 'bout that when I said it's Sund'y.

Blake.—What about?

Priscilla.—'Bout Father. He can't scold us like he usually does when he's shinin' our shoes for Sund'y school.

Blake.—I haven't done anythin' this week anyways.

Priscilla.—I always think I haven't, but Father usually finds somethin'.

Blake.—He don't find anythin' you didn't do.

Priscilla.—Last Sund'y it was because I said I was up at Howe's instead of up at *Mr.* Howe's.

Blake.—That wa'n't very bad.

Priscilla.—Disrespectful, Father said. He's more partic'lar since Mums died.

Blake.—Watches us more an' everythin'. Comes into our rooms more after we're abed.

Priscilla.—He puts puffum'ry on my piller. I c'n smell it in the mornin'. I never knew where it come from till one night I woke up an' saw him, but I didn't let on. Does he put puffum'ry on your piller, Blake?

Blake.—Naw—that's because you're a *girl.*

Priscilla.—I s'pose so.—Blake, I'd rather get scolded than have Father sick.

Blake.—So wouldn't I.

*(*BLAKE *goes and looks up stairway, listens at Father's door, looks out door right, comes down stage picking up a doll from chair back right on his way. Hands it to* PRISCILLA *who is still sitting on the hassock.)*

Blake.—Here, take Betty.

Priscilla.—I'm goin' to give her away.

Blake.—What for?

Priscilla.—I'm gettin' most too big for dolls now. I gotter begin to think 'bout keepin house for Father an' you.

Blake (Eagerly).—Then we wouldn't have to have Mrs. Johnson.

Priscilla.—Just Delia to wash an' iron.

Blake.—It would be more quiet like.

Priscilla.—Without her to scold us.

Blake.—You gotter go to school a while yet though.

Priscilla.—I s'pose so.

Blake.—You're ten now, ain't you?

Priscilla.—M h'm.

Blake.—Better wait till you're twelve like me—most thirteen.

Priscilla.—Yes, I s'pose so.

Blake.—Anyways, havin' Mrs. Johnson to keep house for us is better'n the way it was when Mums went to the Hospital.

Priscilla.—Mercy sakes, yes.

Blake.—I didn't like stayin' up town at Grampa's.

Priscilla.—You'd oughter. You c'n set up later at Grampa's.

Blake.—Only half an hour an' there ain't anythin' you c'n do. They're always readin' an' you have to keep quiet.

Priscilla.—Same at Mrs. Miller's. I didn't like it there neither.

Blake.—You'd oughter. She makes cookies for you.

Priscilla.—Only sometimes.—I used to miss you after supper, Blake. I couldn't do my home lessons alone.

Blake.—You oughter learn to. I don't have anybody.

Priscilla.—But fractions are *terrible* hard.

Blake.—Aw, wait till you get to square root.

(Silence. PRISCILLA *apparently prefers not to contemplate square root.)*

Priscilla.—Blake, I'm scaret we might have to go up town to live again.

(Looks at door to Father's room. BLAKE, *startled, looks also. Gets hold of himself like the man of twelve that he is.)*

Blake.—Naw—forget it.

Priscilla.—But if he don't get better soon?

Blake.—Guess he will all right. *(Looks about nervously.)* Funny 'bout that other nurse. Funny she don't come out for somethin' if she's in there. She wouldn't be just settin' in there. It's too cold.

Priscilla.—Blake, if we do have to go up town, d'you s'pose we could *both* go to Grampa's?

Blake.—I'm not s'posin' anythin'.

Priscilla.—They's more room at Grampa's.

Blake.—But you can't go in all the rooms. Yon can't go in the liberry unless Grampa's there—unless you go unbeknownst.

Priscilla.—We could go unbeknownst.

Blake (A bit eagerly).—Mebbe. An' read Huckleberry Finn without gettin' caught.

Priscilla.—Anyways, I'd oughter go to Grampa's. They're relations an' Mrs. Miller ain't relations.

Blake.—Funny 'bout that.

Priscilla.—Father paid board for me. Gene Miller told me. His mother said so. You don't pay board to relations.

Blake.—An' y'ain't s'posed to live with relations. You're s'posed to live with your fam'ly—your mother an' father an' brothers an' sisters. When you live with relations, it's special.

Priscilla.—An' it's worse special when you live with Millers. They ain't even relations.

Blake.—When Mums was in the hospital, Gramma told the minister that one child was an awful strain—that's me—an' that two would be one too many—that's you. That's why you was sent to Miller's. Gramma don't like things special. She likes 'em the way they always was.

Priscilla.—Father don't think we're a strain.

Blake (Impatiently).—He's *fam'ly,* I'm tellin' you. He ain't *relations.*

Priscilla (Meekly).—I s'pose so.

*(*BLAKE *gets up and goes to Father's door.* PRISCILLA *stands up to see what he is doing. Puts her doll on the table.* BLAKE *leans over and holds one hand against the crack under the door.)*

Blake.—Gee, the wind ain't doin' a thing but come under that door. That's what makes it so cold here. I'll get some coats.

*(*BLAKE *exits right.* PRISCILLA *approaches the door fearfully. Straightens suddenly with forced bravery and reaches for door knob. She starts back as* BLAKE *re-enters with two overcoats. He drops one on the floor while he helps* PRISCILLA *into the other—a man's size. Then he dons his own.* PRISCILLA *is swallowed in the large coat. She again tends the sputtering lamp, which is casting weird shadows about the room. She has to pull back the coat sleeves to use her hands and she has to hold up the coat when she walks. She goes over to window left, flattens her nose against it and looks out.* BLAKE *stands looking at his father's door, scratches his head wonderingly, then comes down stage. Sits on arm of chair right and looks at door.)*

Priscilla.—It's snowin' again.

Blake.—Yeah?

Priscilla.—Hard.

Blake.—S'posin' Doctor Horton's flivver gets stuck!

Priscilla.—An' he couldn't come see Father!

Blake (Importantly).—I'd go for him in the sleigh. Guess we'll always keep that sleigh. They ain't none left up town. Folks'll wish they was us if it keeps on snowin'.

Priscilla.—It's most up to the mail box.

Blake.—Holy Moses!

*(*BLAKE *rushes to the window and looks out.)*

Priscilla.—It's gettin' light now.

*(*BLAKE *goes back and sit in chair right. Rumples his hair pensively and looks toward door.)*

Priscilla.—It's pretty just the same.

Blake.—M h'm.

Priscilla.—It ain't so pretty up town—up to Grampa's or Miller's.

Blake (By way of whistling in the cemetery).—Aw, shut up —talkin' 'bout goin' up to Grampa's—will you? We won't have to go. It ain't like when Mums was in the hospital. Father ain't in the hospital, is he?

Priscilla.—But if he don't hurry up an' get better?

Blake.—Shut up, I tol' you.

Priscilla.—I'm gonter ask him, Blake. I don't care if the nurse *is* in there.

*(*BLAKE *becomes interested and approaches the door with her. Tries to be calm, but wants to postpone opening the door.)*

Blake.—S'pose he's asleep?

Priscilla.—We just won't wake him—that's all.

Blake (With courage all mustered).—I'll go first.

Priscilla.—I ain't scaret to go first.

Blake.—They ain't nothin' to be scaret of. Anyways I'll go first.

Priscilla.—Don't look so's they's any light in there. *(Drops coat on chair.)*

Blake.—We'll leave the door open an' we c'n see.—Better keep that coat on. It's cold in there, I tol' you.

*(*PRISCILLA *puts the coat on again. Approaches the door and reaches for the knob hesitatingly.* BLAKE *with sudden determination, seizes it, turns it, and throws back the door, which opens into Father's room. He stands on one side of the door and* PRISCILLA *on the other, giving an unobstructed view of the room. Directly in front of the door, but several feet back, is a shrouded cot. The sheets are stirring in a strong breeze. The children stand speechless for a moment, and then the wind slams the door to and at the same time ends the dying struggles of the kerosene lamp. The daylight has become strong enough so that the children can be dimly seen as they come down stage.* PRISCILLA *drops to the hassock limply.* BLAKE *drops to his knees close to her—closer than before—and then sits on his feet. Both children are hidden from the rear of the room by the drooping table cover. They stare into space for a moment.)*

Priscilla.—What was that thing?—the big white thing, Blake?

Blake (Unsteadily).—Dunno, P'sill. It wa'n't there las' night.

(Both start at a noise from above. Huddle together as MRS. JOHNSON *comes noisily down the stairs. She is a stolid stern looking woman with her hair pulled tightly into a "pug" on top of her head. She is carrying a lamp which she places on the small table left. Takes up phone. Children sit motionless and wide-eyed as she talks.)*

Mrs. Johnson.—Ring two-three on this line, please.—Hullo—Mis' Weeks?—Didn't know as you'd be up yet, bein' Sund'y.—You've *heard,* of course?—No, I guess they's nothin' you c'n do except mebbe to lend us some chairs for the services Tuesd'y.—What say?—No, they don't know yet. They haven't woke up. I'll tell 'em first pop out o' the box when they do.—No, I don't mind tellin' 'em. 'Tain't as if they'd take it bad.—Why, the old folks are goin' to take Blake, but they ain't decided yet what they're goin' to do with Priscilla. They'll board her out somewheres most likely. She c'n earn her keep. I've learned her lots in the time I've ben here.—No, it's a good thing they ain't no older. As you say, they're too young to realize.—Yes, I just wanted to be sure you'd heard. G'bye.

(Hangs up. Takes lamp and exits right. Children remain silent for a moment.)

Blake (Shakily).—I'll see you sometimes, P'sill—Sat'd'ys mebbe.

Priscilla.—We won't be fam'ly any more, will we? We'll just be relations.

Blake (Slowly).—M'm. Just relations.

*(*PRISCILLA *gives way. Lets her head drop in her arms on her knees and sobs violently.* BLAKE *draws his sleeve across his eyes and blinks.)*

CURTAIN

A BYRON OF THE BRUSH

BY FELIX SPER

Picture, if you will, the rough-hewn figures of Milton's archangels, the souls of Dante writhing in lakes of lava, the seraphim of Blake, the massive bodies of Rubens, the frantic horrors of Poe, the mockery of Voltaire. Mix these incongruous elements into one compound, shake the precipitate into one human temperament, and the result will be a half-mad painter who astounded his contemporaries of Belgium about sixty years ago: Antoine Wiertz.

His work is known to the art critics who haunt European art corners, and to the traveler who visits the sun-flooded atelier-museum in Brussels dedicated to his works alone. To gallery-gallivanters, who have gazed rapt at quiet scenes of canal or pasture-landscape or homely interiors, fresh from the Reiks-musée of Amsterdam, the change is shocking and at the same time challenging. The first impression senses a force over-whelming, puzzling, inexplicable, inchoate. Further inspection reveals a soul at war with the world and with itself.

Wiertz (1806-1865) was a Belgian who painted in the grand manner as he swept gigantic canvases with Titanic strokes. Cyclopean figures hewn largely, sprawl and struggle madly in mid-air. Seraph and demon clash, to tell—what? The half-dozen themes that sweep the towering frames and give an impression of diversity enclose the handwork of a tortured spirit that swung from moods imperturbable to moods frenetic; from the vision beatific to the horror infernal.

Not only the tremendous engaged his energies but the trivial. When imagination failed, the brush was busy tracing idle outlines. . . . The results are often droll. In one corner of the immense hall a servant's head is cautiously peeping thru a half-open doorway. One is tempted to pass thru, only to meet —the wall. The illusion is perfect. Diagonally opposite in half-shadows sleeps a dog in his kennel; another illusion perpetrated by the master-joker. The story goes that the painter's mother, an invalid, used to sit at the window and watch her dog in his kennel. When the dog died, the painter to comfort the old woman, painted a likeness of the dog asleep, head and paws exposed, and placed the canvas within the kennel. Legend does not say whether the ruse deceived. As one enters or leaves the museum, the quick eye will catch the face of the beery, dozing concierge, cap slung forward on head, resting within the frame: another likeness that will never move. Yes, the painter loved his little joke, though in such moments he played with color in the manner of a literal realist.

Clearly, the painter could be microscopically precise, photographic to the line. An early still-life of a skull on a book, next to a bottle, is caught so minutely, one can almost count the loose leaves, trace the fissures in the skull, and count the streaks in the cork. No camera could more exactly catch the still-life. A habit of putting down everything he saw, he never lost. Even in later years, when his subjects grew wild and morbid, he lavished extreme care on veristic detail. A carefully-sewed rent on a dwarf's sleeve, a gun of a brigand pointed at the observer, coffin-nails, skeleton, all show a fearful precision, a weird exactness.

Antwerp, Rome, Paris, Liége, Brussels—these countries saw Wiertz at work. As a result, the student worked under contradictory influences which he could not fuse. The North furnished Rubens, whom he adored; the South, Raphael. Michelangelo too must have given him a taste for the heroic. If Rubens inspired a love for the titanic groupings and taught him tonalities of flesh, Raphael revealed the secret of seraphic Madonnas and bambini. His Magdalens, therefore, are plump and Flemish, fleshed in Italian tints, the sexes differentiated into bronze satyrs and milk-white nymphs, convulsed and feverish masses. His holy virgins are lifeless. On Flemish torsos, he put Raphael heads. *The Revolt of Hell against Heaven* might have been signed by a pupil of Rubens; the *Education of the Virgin* might have been done by a student of Raphael. Two selves possessed the same body; neither dominated.

After 1850, he entered a philosophic stage, absorbed such humanitarian creeds then sweeping Europe as the religion of progress, the perfectibility of man, and turned lesser Rousseau and communist. Naturally, he hated war, and its prophet, Napoleon. One of his most eccentric pictures is that of Napoleon with folded arms standing in flames while dishevelled women point fingers of rage at him, thrust arms and legs of mutilated corpses into his face and scream hatred. He stands his ground firmly and solemnly within the flames.

Then the painter's hatred bittered into mockery and fierce satire; but the critical spirit hampered the flow of line. Witness *Civilization in the Nineteenth Century* showing a woman and child pursued by soldier-bullies leaping over window-ledges to catch their prey. On numerous occasions the Christ theme came into play. Soon, the Messianic grew into an obsession. *The Power of Redemption through Christ,* the *Parties according to Christ,* the *Parties Judged by Christ,* the *Education of the Virgin,* and best of all, the *Triumph of Christ*—these betray the pious purpose and show an intense handling of masses on a large scale. The picture last-mentioned shows a masterly flow of design—huddled figures soaring peacefully to the trumpetings of the righteous as the blazing vision of the Man on the Cross illumines the upper center. Truly, an apocalyptic vision!

Finally, as he reached the sick years of his career, the skull began to haunt him; the skeleton beneath the flesh. The early jester turned ironist. He played with contrasts of the fair and the horrible, the fleshly and the putrid. For example, in the *Two Young Girls* the jest is literally carried out: a plump fair nude faces her double: a skeleton. Then in the *Mirror of the Devil,* he contrasts the same nude, dressed and undressed facing the mirror. In the one case, a little devil lurks behind the frame.

But mockery degenerated into the gruesome. The imp of the macabre tugged at his brain and guided his brush. Black ideas assailed him waiting for white moments of release. One day to unveil a new canvas he invited the public to his atelier. When he pulled the string, the assembled crowd drew back in horror at the sight of *Hunger, Madness, Crime.* This revolting study shows an insane woman in the act of mangling her babe for food. Her eye-balls glare, her knife is suspended near the head, and one tender foot of the babe already shows from the swinging pot over the fire. . . . Furies!!! Unforgettable is the picture of the cholera victim too soon put into the coffin, madly struggling to get out of the box before burial. But Wiertz never forgot the texture of things. One is struck by the absolute fidelity, over precise, of wood and nails, not to mention the wild look in the eyes. Other studies of the macabre are in like vein.

All in all, Wiertz is a singular study in conflict and contradiction; a psychologic enigma. His conceptions were vast and heroic, his treatment, bold yet restrained. But his forms were decidedly conventional. Rubens fought with Raphael for mastery; neither won. Voluptuous cravings clashed with pious stirrings. Where the artist saw plump curves of breast and buttock, the messiah saw sin and evil in the world. To rein in the free pagan spirit and call on Christ for help is to invite paralysis. It is like asking Swinburne to join hands with Billy Sunday. This tug of war between opposing forces must result in suspending the subject between heaven and hell. That is why Wiertz became neither a Rembrandt nor a Blake. He attempted the sublime, but fell like Lucifer; he aimed at the Miltonic but hit the Byronic. In short, the very blackest torment is to suffer, as Wiertz did, from nympholepsy and the messianic delusion.

The net result of his work shows a medley of uneven virtues. Now Flemish, now Italian, he belongs to neither school, nor fuses them. He was a poor portraitist. His own portrait shows the artist in a Byronic pose before a ladder, placid, correct, rigid. He attempted miniatures without finesse or charm. He was a competent sculptor in the rough, a pencil sketcher of extraordinary skill, and a master of photographic detail in which light one must regard all his canvases. His fancy took allegorical turns, now pious, now satiric. But the treatment is pompous. He invented a process of painting flat on raw canvas with the result that some of these Cyclopean studies look like blurred tapestries. Finally his nudes are heaving statues, smooth as marble and as lifeless.

There is little excitement over life's little realities. His texture is too smooth, too literal. An ironist in pigment, he often lost himself in the illustration or the satire. He failed to humanize or universalize any of his themes. In this respect he is vastly inferior to the little Dutch masters who worked profundities within little space. Despite the violence of his macabre studies, little passion is felt. Theatrical rather than dramatic, convulsive rather than convincing, cataclysmic rather than compelling one must sum him up as artist and critic.

Incidentally, the painter occasionally broke into discourse on the theory of his art. He wrote on Rubens, his master, and on the Flemish school of painting; two interesting contributions to the esthetics of his day.

A half-genius nailed to the cross of conflict, tormented by yes and no, now Apollo, now Christ, such is the story of the Belgian Byron: Antoine Wiertz.

WHEN A MAN WANDERS

A ONE-ACT PLAY FOR WOMEN

By Hazel Harper Harris

Cast of Characters

Mrs. Jefferson, *a placid, rather old-fashioned woman of about fifty years of age. Spectacles. Hair parted smoothly in the middle. Print house dress, apron with pocket.*

Margaret Jefferson, *her daughter-in-law, a young up-to-date woman of the city dressed in chic clothes.*

Mammy Rachel, Mrs. Jefferson's *colored cook. Large, good-natured, dressed in calico with blue-checked apron and cap.*

Mrs. Phillips, *a neighbor, a small frail woman of the lavender and old lace type.*

Kate and Ethel, *girl friends of* Margaret's *husband, dressed in extreme styles, voluble, irresponsible.*

Scene: *The living room of* Mrs. Jefferson's *cottage in a small town, furnished in comfortable pieces of old furniture, cushions that are useful and durable, family portraits, geraniums, canary, house cat.*

Time: *The present.*

Mrs. Jefferson *is found sitting in a low rocker darning stockings, footstool, sewing table or cabinet close by.*

Margaret *awkwardly sews buttons on a small pair of rompers.*

Margaret.—Nothing you can say will change me. I shall get a divorce.

Mrs. Jefferson.—But, Margaret, there's the baby.

Margaret.—I'd rather he would not remember his father.

Mrs. Jefferson (Looking up from her work).—His father was just as innocent once!

Margaret.—I know, Mother Jefferson, there's no use going over this again and again, he's your son, and you love him—but he's *my* husband.

Mrs. Jefferson.—And you do not love him now?

Margaret (Fiercely).—Certainly I love him—but I hate him more.

*(*Mrs. Jefferson *shakes her head.)*

Margaret.—Oh, you do not understand, I love what he has been to me, what I thought he was but—do you suppose I'd *live* with a man who is in love with another woman?

Mrs. Jefferson.—He isn't in love with her, he just thinks he is.

Margaret (Cynically).—Which amounts to the same thing! I'm glad I found those letters and I shall be glad to be free.

Mrs. Jefferson.—Now don't do anything in a hurry.

Margaret.—Hurry! I've been here a whole week and have cried until I can't cry any more.

(Knock on door and Mammy Rachel *enters.)*

Mammy.—Law, Mis' Jefson, dat baby sho' minds me of Mr. Richard, always awantin' somethin' ter eat. I done gib him fo' cookies and two doughnuts. Now he wants a samwich eff'n he doan bus'.

Margaret.—Don't give him anything else to eat, Aunt Rachel, give him something to play with so he won't bother you.

Mammy.—When's Mr. Richard comin'? I sho' do wants ter see him. Ol' Rachel's eyes been sore ebbery since he lef'.

Mrs. Jefferson.—He's too busy to come now. Stir up a nice soft gingerbread with raisins, but don't let the baby lick the pan, he's had enough.

Mammy.—Yas'm I sho' will, I mean I sho' won't, yas'm.

(Exit Mammy Rachel.*)*

(Comes back and sticks her head in the door.)

Mammy.—Miss Marg'ret, you tell Mr. Richard when you writes that Ol' Rachel still knows how to make gingerbread.

(Exit Mammy Rachel.*)*

Mrs. Jefferson.—Well, his old negro mammy still loves him. I remember one night when he was a little fellow—

Margaret.—Now, Mother, don't start telling me any of those old tales, it wouldn't change me a particle.

(Re-enter Mammy.*)*

Mammy.—Mrs. Phillips done come in de back do' and bring you dis Aggie and Rita Jelly.

Mrs. Jefferson (Raising her voice).—Come on in Mrs. Phillips.

(Enter Mrs. Phillips. Margaret *rises and seats her.* Mrs. Jefferson *smiles over her glasses and lays her darning in her lap.)*

Mrs. Phillips.—I came over to bring your daughter some of my agarita jelly. *(Turning to* Margaret.*)* You remember you liked it so well the last time you and Richard were here. Didn't he come with you this time?

Mrs. Jefferson—I telephoned Margaret to come up and pay me a little special visit while Richard is attending to some business out of town.

Mrs. Phillips.—That is nice. But I know you miss him terribly. Mr. Phillips and I have never been separated a single day during the thirty years we have been married.

Margaret.—That's a wonderful record!

Mrs. Phillips.—Richard always teased us about it. At one of our anniversaries he played such a prank on us—Bless his heart—always into something, but forgiven and loved more the next minute.

Margaret (Changing the subject abruptly).—I'm so glad you remembered that I liked your jelly—

(Knock on door. Mammy Rachel *enters.)*

Mammy.—'Scuse me ladies, 'scuse me, Miss Margaret, dat boy—*(laughs and covers her face with her apron)* he's jes lak Mr. Richard for the worl' he's dat cute with his mischief.

Margaret.—What has he done now?

Mammy.—Done? What aint he done! He's put his marbles in my gingerbread dough—

Mrs. Jefferson.—Well, you got them out didn't you?

Mammy.—Law' no, I'se a bakin' them in it, won't he be surprised?

Mrs. Jefferson.—My Goodness, Rachel, of course they were dirty!"

Mammy.—No'm they wasn't. I had just finished washing them after he had put them in the sugar bowl for Easter eggs. But that ain't what I had to tell you, *(laughing)* he's poured the rest of the raisins in the c-h-u-rn!

Margaret.—Good gracious, we will just have to bring him in here!

Mrs. Jefferson.—Take him in my room, Rachel, and let him play in the big closet where Richard's toys are.

Rachel.—Yas'm.

(Exit Rachel.*)*

Mrs. Phillips (Rising).—I must go on home now, tell Junior to bring his Auntie Phillips a piece of his gingerbread and she'll see what she can find to amuse a little boy. He looks so much like Richard.

Margaret (Sees her to the door).—Come back again Mrs. Phillips. Thank you so much for the jelly.

Margaret to Mrs. Jefferson.—Do I have to keep on hearing Richard, Richard, Richard!

Mrs. Jefferson.—My dear, he is yours, people will always think of you together.

Margaret.—Not after I have my divorce. That is some consolation.

Mrs. Jefferson.—I don't know about that, dear, I have seen a great many people divorced, and it seems to me that it just makes folk link them together the same as ever, then tack on the ugly story and talk and talk. When a wife forgives her husband, the world soon forgets there ever was anything to forgive. See what the baby is doing.

(Exit Margaret. Mrs. Jefferson *darns on in silence except for a sigh. Re-enter* Margaret.*)*

Margaret.—Junior is into a box of your old letters!

Mrs. Jefferson.—Let him alone. Richard always like to play postman with them. Dear me, it seems but yesterday. One day the minister was calling and put one in his pocket. *(Laughs, takes off spectacles and wipes eyes with handkerchief from apron pocket.)* It was a forlorn love letter—*(lowers voice to a whisper)* and it began 'Dear Devil Eyes!'

Margaret.—Why Mother!

Mrs. Jefferson still enjoying the joke.—The minister returned it the next day with a *very* stiff note!

Margaret.—Dear Devil Eyes! Did anyone ever say that to you!

Mrs. Jefferson.—Well, I put it back in the collection—you can see for yourself some day.

Margaret (Looking out of the window).—Here comes Kate and Ethel, why on earth can't people leave me alone! *(Hastily powdering nose.)*

(Enter Kate *and* Ethel.*)*

Kate.—We came on in without knocking. Hello everybody!

Ethel.—Why didn't you tell us you were coming?

Margaret.—I surprised myself.

Kate.—Where have you hidden that good-looking husband?

Ethel.—Since *we* couldn't get him you might let us worship in his presence once in a while.

Mrs. Jefferson (Laughing and highly pleased).—Girls!

Kate.—Jolliest old scout in our bunch—always getting us all into scrapes, then extricating himself.

Mrs. Jefferson.—Won't you girls stay and have lunch with us?

Ethel.—Oh, I wish we could, but we have a beauty parlor date. We just dropped by to invite Margaret to a dance. *(Turning to* MARGARET.*)* I suppose you and Richard still dance.

Margaret.—Richard has gone on a business trip.

Kate.—He's not here!

Mrs. Jefferson.—No, Margaret came over to rest up a little. I'm afraid they have been playing city society too much lately.

Ethel.—Oh, shucks, then you can't pad around with us, I suppose?

Margaret.—I'm afraid not this time.

Kate.—Well, we will wander along. Give Richard a kiss apiece from us.

Ethel.—See that she does, Mrs. Jefferson.

Mrs. Jefferson.—All right, girls, goodbye.

*(*MARGARET *sees girls to door.)*

(Re-enters.)

Margaret.—It's Richard this, and Richard that with everybody who comes in. Well, they will have a nice mess of Richard served up to them in court and maybe the flavor won't be so fine!

Mrs. Jefferson.—Now, daughter, they think it pleases you is the reason they talk about him. Folk used to do me the same way when I went to visit his father's people.

Margaret.—That's all very well, but his father is a man you can love and respect. You can't know how I feel because you have always been loved and protected. Why, Father Jefferson worships the ground you walk on. Nothing is too good for you. And as for other women, he told me the other day that there never was a woman in the world who could hold a candle to you. You don't know what it means to see in your own husband's handwriting love messages to another woman, and to know that he has been meeting her when he should have been attending to business. If you *did* know you would *want* me to get a divorce.

(Pause.)

*(*Mrs. Jefferson *darns and* Margaret *wipes her eyes.)*

Mrs. Jefferson.—If I told you that I have been through the same experience would it help you any?

Margaret (Staring).—What do you mean?

Mrs. Jefferson.—I'll tell you something, daughter, a long, long time ago Richard's father fell in love with a woman and went deeply in debt to provide luxuries for her while I stayed at home and watched over his son.

Margaret.—And you forgave him?

Mrs. Jefferson.—Yes, it was the best thing to do. He got over it soon and Richard grew up loving and respecting his father.

Margaret.—But what about the woman?

Mrs. Jefferson.—She married another man and no one ever knew.

Margaret.—You should have scratched her eyes out just as I am going to do.

Mrs. Jefferson.—No dear, be merciful, let her have a chance to come back.

Margaret.—Women of this kind never do. They go on breaking somebody else's heart.

Mrs. Jefferson.—Sometimes they come back, at least you won't be to blame if you do not advertise her guilt.

Margaret.—Didn't you suffer for a long time?

Mrs. Jefferson.—Yes, Margaret, and I will tell you why. Whenever my husband was especially lovely to me, I thought that he was trying to make up for the heart-ache and humiliation, if he were cross and irritable, I imagined that he was comparing me with his happy hours with her. And so for a long time it remained an old sore that couldn't be healed because I kept picking at it.

Margaret.—That is just why I want a divorce. I could never forget it. I keep wondering how she looks, what he said to her, what she thinks of me—and I hate her.

Mrs. Jefferson.—What will you gain by divorce?

Margaret.—At least I'll keep my self respect.

Mrs. Jefferson.—I don't know, dear, self respect grows from the knowing that you can stand in the face of trouble. A divorce is the running away, not the healing of the heartache. You'd have so many more hours in which to brood over the injustice then.

Margaret.—I could give that much more time to Junior.

Mrs. Jefferson.—Look at it in this way. If Junior were to become suddenly fond of peppermint candy and ate too much of it, you wouldn't send him away from you, would you?

Margaret.—Nonsense, Mother, to compare a grown man's disloyalty to a child's indiscretion.

Mrs. Jefferson.—I don't think so, dear. Richard was always a big baby. I have known of men getting too much peppermint candy of this kind and being sickened on it for life. Richard thinks it is forbidden and he is helping himself, he'll be pretty sick before long, then he'll need you to help him get well.

Margaret.—What about me?

Mrs. Jefferson.—You'll get your reward. Would you like to know what my reward has been?

Margaret.—I suppose it is Father Jefferson's adoration of you now.

Mrs. Jefferson.—Yes, that is one thing, but I count you as my chief reward. To know that my son has a wife who has been stanch and true and equal to any emergency has meant much. Oh, my dear, you don't know how often I have thanked God for you.

Margaret.—You have been a mother to me. You know that my own mother died so young. I do not remember her, but Father has always wanted me to grow up like her.

Mrs. Jefferson.—Your mother was very beautiful, Margaret,—and wise. I believe that she would have advised you as I have done.

Margaret.—I would forgive Richard for your sake if I could, but my mind is made up. I don't even want to see him again. I don't want to keep on arguing about it, so I think I had better see what the baby is doing.

(Exit MARGARET *carrying her finished sewing.)*

*(*MRS. JEFFERSON *folds up her work, tidies the room, takes off her apron, walks up and down the room as if thinking out a problem. Finally stands by the table facing audience and lifts her eyes, clasping her hands in prayer. Enough time must elapse here to allow* MARGARET *to read the letter.)*

Mrs. Jefferson.—Oh, my Father, I have done everything possible. I will not tell her, not even to save my own boy. I will just leave the problem to God, for I will not tell her that the woman who did this thing to me was her own mother!

(Re-enter MARGARET.*)*

Margaret (Agitated, holding to the table).—Junior has opened some of your letters.: You told me I could see them sometime. I read this one, *(holding out a letter to* MRS. JEFFERSON*)* the one Father Jefferson wrote to you after you had forgiven him. It is the most beautiful, the most wonderful thing I ever read. I too will forgive and wait for love as exalted as that.

Mrs. Jefferson (Taking her in her arms).—Thank God!

CURTAIN

THE CLASSICAL IN ROBERT FROST

BY GEORGE O. AYKROYD

Robert Frost, laureate of the average man, has succeeded in developing a type of poetic expression which is, to an astonishing degree, almost devoid of classical ornament. He has demonstrated that poetry can be just as intelligible to the layman as to the initiate. His poems possess irresistable appeal for even the most Victorian of us despite the fact that in his published works there are only five classical allusions. Frost himself gives the reason for this glaring absence of the classic in that arresting bucolic entitled *Pan with Us:*

Pan came out of his woods one day,—
His skin and his hair and his eyes were gray,
The gray of the moss of the walls were they,—
    And stood in the sun and looked his fill
    At wooded valley and wooded hill.

He stood in the zephyr, pipes in hand,
On a height of naked pasture land;
In all the country he did command
    He saw no smoke and he saw no roof.
    That was well! and he stamped a hoof.

His heart knew peace, for none came here
To this lean feeding save once a year
Someone to salt the half-wild steer,
    Or homespun children with clicking pails
    Who see so little they tell no tales.

He tossed his pipes, too hard to teach
A new-world song, far out of reach,
For a sylvan sign that the blue jay's screech
    And the whimper of hawks beside the sun
    Were music enough for him, for one.

Times were changed from what they were:
Such pipes kept less of power to stir

The fruited bough of the juniper
  And the fragile bluets clustered there
  And the merest aimless breath of air.

They were pipes of pagan mirth,
And the world had found new terms of worth.
He laid them down on the sun-burned earth
  And ravelled a flower and looked away—
  Play? Play?—what should he play?

Pan, symbol of classic culture, finds that his powers fail to make an appeal in the modern world. His song falls on ears ignorant of what he represents. Yes! times have changed. The bard must pitch his song to the new-world ear. Thus Frost seems to reason and rightly. His predecessors have already paid our debt to Greece and Rome apparently under the impression that the Owl and the Eagle were usurers. Frost and his contemporaries, on the other hand, are making a commendable effort to interpret our American culture in truly American expression.

Another selection from the work of Frost will further clarify his position:

He moved it roughly with an iron bar,
He loaded an old stone-boat with the star
And not as you might think, a flying car,
Such as even poets would admit perforce
More practical than Pegasus the horse
If it could put a star back in its course.

The poet seems to argue: it would seem absurd even to poets, to whom nothing is impossible, to replace a fallen star in the firmament by loading it on Pegasus, the winged steed of ancient lore, when the aeroplane is a practical reality. Times change—the impossible becomes the possible—speculation becomes reality—and poets must keep their eyes forward, probing the mysteries which confront contemporary life.

This passage also fittingly exhibits Frost as a realist. Frost has somewhere explained realists in these words: "There are two types of realist: the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one, and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I am inclined to be the second kind. To me the thing that art does for life is to clear it, to strip it to form!" In *New Hampshire* he says:

I'm what is called a sensibilitist,
Or otherwise an environmentalist.
I refuse to adapt myself a mite
To any change from hot to cold, from wet
To dry, from poor to rich, or back again.

After elaborating this idea somewhat he continues:

The more the sensibilitist I am
The more I seem to like my mountains wild.

Little wonder that Frost resents the idea of having Pegasus fly over his New Hampshire mountains when an aeroplane would be more in order!

Robert Frost is ever the kind friend and neighbor who chats with you over his New England stone wall on a variety of subjects. He is a conversationalist poet. Witness the alluring invitation in the following:

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by its mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

This is the typical style of Frost. Here is no room for the sonorous and meaning-laden words of classical usage. What have heathen gods to do in this Puritan Paradise? Why should mellow Falernian usurp the place of sweet cider?

There are times, however, when not even Frost in all his realism can resist the classical. One notable instance of this is found in *Mountain Interval* in a thoroughly native poem, which, perhaps even unconsciously, has classical purport, *Hyla Brook.*

By June our brook's run out of song and speed.
Sought for much after that, it will be found
Either to have gone groping underground
(And taken with it all the Hyla breed
That shouted in the mist a month ago,
Like ghost of sleigh-bells in a ghost of snow)—
Or flourished and come up in jewel-weed,

> Weak foliage that is blown upon and bent
> Even against the way its waters went.
> Its bed is left a faded paper sheet
> Of dead leaves stuck together by the heat—
> A brook to none but who remember long.
> This as it will be seen in other far
> Than with brooks taken otherwhere in song.
> We love the things we love for what they are.

"Hyla" is probably a corruption of "Hylas," the young man who was tenderly beloved by Hercules. Going out to secure water from a spring, he was dragged into the pool by the nymphs who had become enamored of him. Hercules, troubled that the boy did not return, went out in search of him. When he approached the spring he could hear the voice of Hylas but could in no way discover where he was. This, combined with the voices and siren-like cries of the Naiads, led Hercules on a futile search for his lost companion.

There seems to be a strange and elusive similarity between this story and the poem. It may be unintentional on the part of the author. "Our brook's run out of song and speed" seems to have its counterpart in the story insomuch as the nymphs were dwelling in calm and quiet amid the placid waters of the pool. "Sought for much after that" compares favorably with the thought of Hercules' search for Hylas. The idea of the nymphs' seizure of Hylas and dragging him down into the pool seems to be admirably re-echoed in the phrase "gone groping underground." "That shouted in the mist a month ago" seems to refer to the cries of Hylas and the songs of the Naiads. Here our comparison must stop, although other strong similarities force themselves upon the attention of him who wishes to see them. It would, perhaps, be unfair to the poet to push the comparison too far. We can at least say that there is some element of the classic whether or not it was intentional.

Another, and more ostensible classical allusion is found in *New Hampshire* in a poem entitled *Wild Grapes*. Here are the lines:

> I was born, I suppose, like anyone,
> And grew to be a little boyish girl
> My brother could not always leave at home.
> But that beginning was wiped out in fear
> The day I swung suspended with the grapes,

And was come after like Eurydice
And brought down safely from the upper regions;
And the life I live now's an extra life
I can waste as I please on whom I please.

It is impossible to conceive a substitute which would carry all the pregnancy of that one word "Eurydice." Of course it involves knowledge of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. But could there have been wrought a passage so brief and yet so full of connotation without the use of classical allusion? Frost, although he uses it sparingly, is no novice in the use of this sort of ornament and displays rare skill in his handling of similes and metaphors of classical extraction.

There is only one other such necessary classical allusion in the works of Frost. It is in *The Generations of Men* from *North of Boston*. This piece is one of those poetical narratives which only an artist such as Frost can tell. There is to be a reunion of the Stark family at the old homestead which is now in ruins. Since rain interferes, the pilgrimage is not made by all. Two members of the family taking advantage of the solitude wend their separate ways to the spot. The one is a man, the other a woman. Neither is acquainted with the other. By chance they meet on the place and exchange pleasantries. Conversation results in a discussion of one of their female ancestors. Playfully, the young woman volunteers to interpret what the brook running its course behind the ruin has to say. The ensuing dialogue takes place:

"The voices seem to say—"
"I'm waiting."
"Dont! The voices seem to say:
Call her Nausicaa, the unafraid
Of an acquaintance made adventurously."

The appropriateness of this allusion cannot be questioned. The skill with which it is introduced well exhibits the quality and the technique of the artist. He has a thorough mastery of his medium. He knows exactly what each of his pigments will do and applies each with a clear-cut purpose. He takes a single short brush-stroke, placing it on the canvas in the right way. One brush-hair's difference would spoil the picture. Such an artist is Robert Frost.

QUEEN JEZEBEL

By Edith Lombard Squires

Time: *About 800 B. C.*
Place: *Jezreel in Canaan*

Cast of Characters

Jezebel, *Daughter of Eth-baal, king of Tyre, and wife of* King Ahab
Ahab, *King of Israel*
Elijah, *Prophet of Jehovah*
Jehu, *Captain of the king's guards*
Nebat, *Chief Eunuch*
Naamah
Zernah, *Handmaidens of the queen*
Soldier
Messenger
Slave
Other Soldiers

Scene: *It is nearly sunset and the sky reflects a golden light from the far west. In* Ahab's *marble palace at Jezreel,* Queen Jezebel's *golden room reflects the sun. At the right hang heavy golden curtains, concealing a wide divan and at the end of the divan a doorway. At the back the room widens out to a balcony, from which there is a view over the terraced gardens and wide valley to the snow-capped mountains beyond. At the left is a throne chair with a table beside it, on which lies a bronze mirror with a golden handle, and several alabaster boxes. At the extreme left near the front of the stage is a doorway, hidden by heavy golden curtains. In the centre of the stage is a loom, at which two handmaidens are weaving.* Zernah *is singing the "Song of the Freed."*

Zernah.—
Out of the house of bondage,
Out of the halls of night,
Jehovah hath led us onward

Hath covered our winged flight.
He hath taken, hath slain their first-born,
For they would not let us go,
And their hand lay heavy upon us
As the mountain peaks with snow.
He hath given us back our freedom,
Our first-born saved by blood,
While behind us the tears of Egypt
Flow on like the Nile in flood.
He hath led us through darkened desert,
Through wandering, sin-scorched days,
And the land of our longing lies near us;
O give praise to Jehovah, give praise.

Naamah (Pausing in her work).—
Keep silence, Zernah, for thy queen may hear,
And call thee traitress that thou singest so.
She hath no love for great Elijah's god
But brings her own strange gods from far off Tyre,
And worships that Astarte we call Baal.

Zernah.—
Our king hath turned beneath Elijah's hand
Back to the God of Moses that I love.
Dost thou remember that great festal day
When Baal's priests made an altar and didst call—
"O Baal, hear us," till the night hung low.
And then Elijah called Jehovah's name,
He called the God of Jacob, and he heard;
Down from the sky came fire and licked the wood,
And burnt the sacrifice upon the stones.
Then rose a cloud no bigger than my hand,
That grew and spread and covered all the sky;
Then fell the rain we thirsted for so long:
So did we see the error of our ways,
And we rejoiced, as did the tinkling brooks,
We sang for joy as did the shining hills,
And to Jehovah's way we turned our hearts—
But never will the Queen forget that day.—

Naamah (Interrupting her and ceasing to work).—
Elijah slew four hundred prophets there,
Four hundred prophets of the great god Baal.
And mind you well how she did rise in wrath,

In anger that was radiant to see,
And bade them tell Elijah, "Thou has killed—
So will I do to thee, and more will do
Before the day grows older." And that night,
Elijah fled and hid himself away.
Hush, the Queen cometh, let us to our work.

(They weave busily, as QUEEN JEZEBEL *slowly enters from the left. She is clad in white with a deep purple hem to her gown. Her thick, red hair, held by a golden cord, catches the last rays of the setting sun. Her wide blue eyes scan eagerly the golden curtains before the divan.)*

Jezebel—And hath King Ahab's sickness left him yet?

Naamah.—Most gracious queen, I know not; he doth sleep.

Zernah.—And I was weaving here, nor heard a sound,
Nor slightest murmur from the sleeping king.

*(*JEZEBEL *pulls wide the golden curtains, and discloses* KING AHAB *lying on the divan with his face turned to the wall.)*

Jezebel.—
My Ahab, dost thou wake and wilt thou eat?
My handmaids shall go forth to do thy will.

Ahab (Stirring sullenly).—
Thou knowest well, I will not eat nor sleep,
Till Naboth's vineyard shall be his no more,
But part of my fair gardens. Touch me not—
I am no child that thou shouldst seek to kiss
And cuddle out of this way into that.
If thou didst really love me, thou wouldst go
And turn this Naboth from his stubborn ways.
He says the land descends from son to son,
And if he sold, then would his sons' sons curse
The one that sold their land. So will he not.

*(*AHAB *turns away sullenly and hides his face.* JEZEBEL *stands by him with her hand at her breast. She looks at him longingly, then turns and claps her hands.)*

Jezebel.—
Go, Zernah, the chief eunuch—bid him come.
O haste ye both, the day draws to a close.

*(*ZERNAH *goes out and returns immediately, followed by* NEBAT, *who bows low before the queen.* JEZEBEL *motions him*

to follow her to the balcony; she speaks quickly and eagerly, then slips a ring from her finger.)

Jezebel.—

Here is the royal seal—go, find two men,
Who will bear witness that this Naboth swore
Most falsely towards the king. Go, rouse the town,
And bid the people if they love their king,
To stone this Naboth from the city gates.

Nebat.—It shall be done, great queen, and speedily.

(He goes out left and JEZEBEL *stands in the balcony, while her handmaidens weave busily and sing.)*

Naamah and Zernah.—

Now comes the night and all the desert sleeps,
Sleep thou, beloved, on my quiet breast.
Fear not the night, for swift the darkness creeps
Back to its lair bfore Astarte's light.
O hold me close, beloved, in thy arms,
Know only love and love's encircling charms.
Sleep well, beloved, and my dreams shall fold
Across thy heart the vision that I hold.

Jezebel (As if to herself).—

How that high peak of mountain lights the sky!
Beyond it lies my country and the sea.
So many years since I have seen the waves,
The little, lapping waves, the tall, wide seas.
My heart is heavy for familiar ways.
Full well I know the sea will call no more,
No more will ships grow dim before mine eyes,
Ships bound from Tyre to all the wide-flung world.
And yet I hold this prison to my heart,
And wrap myself in love for my dark king,
Love shall shut out the past—yea, everything.

(It is growing darker and the handmaidens stop weaving.)

Go from me now, my maidens, and prepare
All that thou knowest Ahab would desire.
I will remain here in the balcony,
And watch for Nebat that I may have news,
News to delight the sore heart of the king.

(The handmaidens bow low and go out left. The sky turns paler and then darkens slowly. JEZEBEL *stands motionless in the balcony, then turns to look longingly at the king, as he stirs rest-*

lessly. Suddenly from the street below, sound shouts, the crash of falling stones, the barking of many dogs. JEZEBEL *leans out and watches with cold eyes till the tumult dies, then turns swiftly and kneels down by the divan.)*

Jezebel (Exultingly).—

Naboth is dead. His vineyard land is thine.
Turn on thy couch and tell me thou art glad.
I love thee, Ahab, and the darkness comes.

(He turns quickly and embraces her. The stage grows dark.)

(As the stage grows light again, JEZEBEL *and* AHAB *are reclining on the divan, fanned by two slaves, who wield huge, long-handled fans.)*

Jezebel.—

Rest here, my king, with thy own Jezebel,
Before the battle claims thee, rest thy gaze,
Upon this vineyard that is thine at last.
The Syrian hosts encamp at Gilead;
Soon thou shalt cut them down, as falls the grain
Beneath the reaper's knife—my mighty king.

(She embraces him tenderly, then starts up in anger as ELIJAH *enters majestically from the left. He stands there, one arm uplifted.)*

Elijah.—

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the King of Kings.
Lo, in the place where dogs licked up the blood,
The blood of Naboth thou didst false despoil—
So in this day shall dogs lick up thy blood,
And all thy seed shall perish from the ways.
Thy glory shall be dust and bleaching bones,
Thy Jezebel's white skull, her hands, her feet,
They shall lie there in Naboth's vineyard land.

Jezebel.—

Go from me, thou false prophet of strange gods.
Go, or I call the Captain of the Guard,
And he shall seal thy words with singing sword.

(She claps her hands and a slave enters to do her bidding.)

Jezebel.—Go call me Jehu, Captain of the Guard. *(Exit slave.)*

*(*ELIJAH *looks with great sadness at* AHAB*, then walks out slowly and majestically. The golden curtains close behind him.*

JEZEBEL *stands and watches his departure with angry eyes, while* AHAB *sits as if stupefied. Enter* JEHU *at the right.)*

Jehu.—And what are thy commands, O gracious queen?

Jezebel.—

Guard Ahab with thy very life, for now
He must to battle with the Syrians.

(She starts and a light breaks over her face.)

And lo, I have a thought that thou must aid.
Change armor with thy king, thy short sword, too,
And shining helmet—his shall make *thee* king.
Then will their arrows seek another mark,
And Ahab laugh at prophets and false words.

*(*JEHU *slips off his breast-plate and hands it, his sword and helmet, to the king.* AHAB *moves slowly, as if in deep thought.)*

Ahab.—

Elijah will undo this curse for me,
If I confess my fault and grievous sin.
Do thou so also, my own Jezebel,
Let us go softly to the end of time.

Jezebel (Scornfully).—

Will I go softly? No, I will not turn
One hairsbreadth from the way my fathers went.
I do not fear Elijah nor his curse,
Nor shalt thou bow and kiss the dusty way.
Come, gird thyself, and put thy breast-plate on,
And conquer all thy foes, as doth a king.

*(*AHAB *puts on his breast-plate slowly, as if thinking deeply.)*

Ahab (Heavily).—

I would Elijah had not cursed me now,
Before this battle with the Syrians.

(He puts on his helmet and adjusts his sword, then turns to JEZEBEL *his face lighting.)*

Ahab.—

My Jezebel! Thou knowest thou art mine,
And loved as never king loved queen before.
Thy beauty is a beacon for my eyes,
And other women but the little stars
That vanish when the golden sun appears.
And though thou likst it not, "Jehovah keep
And guard thee safely," for I love thee well.

(While AHAB *speaks,* JEHU *stands in the background and looks passionately at* JEZEBEL, *who has no eyes for anyone but* AHAB. AHAB *embraces* JEZEBEL, *then motions to* JEHU *to follow him and they go out left. The bright morning darkens and a chill wind blows in from the desert.* JEZEBEL *claps her hands and* NAAMAH *appears.)*

Jezebel.—

O Naamah, my lord the king hath gone,
Hath marched to battle with the Syrians.
And now the desert wind blows in more keen,
It strikes my very bones and chills my heart.
I bid thee fetch my heavy golden scarf,
And bring thy lute to while away the hours,
Till Ahab doth return from Gilead.

*(*NAAMAH *kisses the queen's robe.)*

Naamah.—

Comfort thyself, my queen, the time shall fly,
Shall sail its wings on many-journeyed song.

*(*NAAMAH *goes out at right.* JEZEBEL *rises and stands in the balcony.)*

Jezebel.—

How soon time will forget that Naboth lived!
Nor will remember that this vineyard land
Was not the king's—for now it is the king's.
What was it that Elijah said but now?
It sticketh in my mind like heavy mire.
I would he had not such deep, piercing eyes;
They hold me though I would not, silence me,
And turn my blood to water—I, the queen,
To fear a lying prophet and his words!
Not for myself I fear, but if his curse
Should fall on Ahab—Ahab whom I love.

(She turns, as NAAMAH *enters, and walks slowly back to the divan and seats herself.* NAAMAH *places the scarf gently around* JEZEBEL'S *shoulders, then takes up her lute and sits at* JEZEBEL'S *feet.)*

Jezebel.—

Turn to thy lute, O Naamah, and sing
To Ashtaroth and all the waiting gods,
That they may aid King Ahab in the fight,
Turn back the Syrians to their unploughed fields

And give the victory to our great king.

Naamah (Singing).—

Now runs the shining sun its race at last,
Now gleam the mountain tops with golden light—
O grieve not for the day, its joy is past,
Rejoice that Ashtaroth now rules the night.
She floods the darkened earth with new delight,
She holds the trembling stars like silly sheep.
O Ashtaroth, great shepherdess of night,
Guard well King Ahab, and lead safe to sleep.

(As NAAMAH *ceases,* JEZEBEL *claps her hands and* ZERNAH *enters at left.)*

Jezebel.—

Sing for the king in praise of his great god,
That all the tide of battle shall be turned,
And we shall gather joy, as do the bees
That sip the flowers that I gather here.

*(*ZERNAH *takes the lute from* NAAMAH *and sings.)*

Zernah.—

O great Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, we pray
Hold thou the pillar of thy cloud to shield,
Hold thou the glory of thy fire to light
The pathway of the King of Israel,
The feet of Ahab and of all his host.
O turn the Syrian horde to bitter death,
Encompass them with darkness and defeat,
That they may know thy might, great Lord of Hosts.

(She stops, for far in the distance is the sound of a chariot drawing nearer, and louder grow shrill shouts and cries. Through the golden curtains at the right, soldiers enter, carrying KING AHAB. JEZEBEL *starts up breathless. They place him gently on the divan; from out his breast-plate stands an arrow-shaft, but no one draws it forth, for he is dead.* JEZEBEL *shrieks—a wild, piercing sound—and throws herself beside him, burying her face in her hands. One of the soldiers turns to* ZERNAH.*)*

Soldier.—

He had not gone beyond the city gates,
When some one sent an arrow, and it pierced
The folds of that bright breast-plate, and his blood
Ran down and stained the roadway, like red wine.
I drove like Jehu with a heavy rein,

But it was all too late—the king was dead.

*(*ZERNAH *and* NAAMAH *tear their clothes and wail shrilly, while far away the city wails and cries)—*

Ahab is dead. Long live King Ahab's son;
King Ahaziah reigneth in his stead.

(The soldiers stand motionless with their heads bowed. JEZEBEL *reaches over and strives to turn the king's face towards her, but his face is still. She stands to her full height and raises her arms high above her head, then lets them fall to her sides.) She speaks to him as if they were alone.)*

Jezebel.—

O Ahab, my beloved, thou art gone.
My heart is heavy as the mountain tops,
The mountain tops that hold the winter snows.
My tears run down, as run the weeping brooks
Down Mt. Gilboa's scarred and stony side.
Life sings no more, no more will spring return,
Spring that we loved—the little, laughing brooks,
The pastures green. My heart is barren ground,
Lo, it is empty of the springs of life.
O Ahab, that thou goest from me now,
And I must weep and know thee nevermore.

(She sinks on her knees by the divan and buries her face in her hands. Her women's wailing is renewed. The stage grows dark.)

(As the stage grows light again, JEZEBEL *is seen seated in the throne chair. A slave fans her. Her head is sunk on her breast and her whole attitude shows deep grief and despair. Her face is very white.* ZERNAH *sits at her feet, while* NAAMAH *stands in the balcony, looking out.)*

Jezebel.—

My son lies at death's door, and I must wait,
And count and count the leaden-footed hours.
No news from Gilead nor from Jehu's men—
One messenger hath gone nor doth return,
And now the second tarryeth overlong.
Tell me, Naamah, dost thou still see nought?
Is there no little cloud of golden dust,
That says my messenger is drawing nigh
To tell me of the battle and my fate?

Naamah.—
The valley lieth quiet, and the hills
Hold high their peace above the desert ways.
I see an empty roadway stretching far.
Jezebel (Moving restlessly).—
O Zernah, take thy lute and sing to me
A dirge for him I loved; but sing no more
Of that strange god that wouldst not hear my prayer.
Zernah (Taking her lute).—
Now will I mourn for thee, O Jezebel.
Now will I lift my voice and sing thy dirge.
Fast sleeps the king thy lover, who has held
The cup of love before thee many years;
And he still holds thy heart, thy heavy heart,
For it is by his side within the tomb.
Jezebel.—
And I that wast so strong am but a slave,
A slave that breathes a reedy-throated flute,
And throws it from her, for her song is done.
And I that held thee close, now ache alone;
And I that held thee warm, now shake with cold.
I am gone down from out the mountain top
To face the desert wind, the stinging sand,
And am swept on and on—I know not where.
O curses on the gods, the lying gods,
That brought me from the dark to blinding love,
And cast me out upon the thorny way
An outcast from my love—now would I die.
Naamah (Excitedly).—
At last I see a little cloud of dust,
A little cloud of spinning, golden dust,
Advancing on the highway, and it grows,
And cometh near, and nearer, till I see
It is thy messenger runs like the wind,
The rippling wind that runs along the corn,
Far in the distance, I see following him
A whirlwind of white dust, a chariot—
A chariot driven like the hurricane—
And only Jehu harnesseth the wind.

(They pause and listen to confused sounds without. **Nebat** *enters, followed by the messenger.)*

Messenger (Breathing heavily and gaspingly).—
Most gracious queen, the victory is ours;
But Jehu would have held me in his tent—
Elijah crowned him king, and now he hastes
To overtake me e'er I tell thee this.

(The messenger kisses the queen's robe and goes out, followed by NEBAT.*)*

Jezebel.—Quick, Zernah, get the unguents for my skin.

(She motions the slave away who has been fanning her, and he goes out left.)

He shall not see my sorrow, my white face,
For I will tear his very heart-strings out.
Quick, tire my hair, and make my beauty shine
As doth the mirrored moon on quiet pool.
Now shall this traitor see me as a queen,
Not as a woman with grief-stricken heart.

(As she talks, the two handmaidens help her as she paints her cheeks and lips, and decks herself as for a bridal. The golden curtains on the right separate and JEHU *enters, followed by* NEBAT. NAAMAH and ZERNAH *go out at left.* NEBAT *stands motionless with his arms folded.* JEZEBEL *remains seated in the throne chair and gazes steadfastly at* JEHU.*)*

Jezebel.—
So, art thou come—like Zimri that is dead—
He, too, betrayed his master and his king.
I hear Elijah told thee thou wert king.
Thou, king! Thou liest, little, buzzing gnat!

(She rises, as JEHU *starts forward, and then she moves slowly back towards the balcony.)*

Jehu.—
My queen, I would win peace and turn thy wrath,
As I have turned the battle-tide and won.
Elijah made me king—and king I am—
But I would make thee queen, my Jezebel.

(She stands in the balcony and glows with anger, as beautiful as Astarte whom she worships. JEHU *is struck dumb and gazes at her.)*

Jezebel.—
Thy Jezebel! O might the lightning strike
And seal forever thy false, lying lips!
But no, I bid thee live to suffer more

Than ever couldst thou in oblivion.
Live and remember Jezebel the Queen,
And curse thyself for all that thou hast done.
Thou canst not hold me with thy lustful eye,
Nor will I plead for mercy at thy feet;
I will go back to that from whence I came—
But thought of me shall hold thee through the years,
For never, never will cold time forget,
Nor let my name be silent. I have lived
In these few days a lifetime—and I go.

*(*JEHU *starts forward.)*

But keep thy distance, traitorous, lustful man —
Thy Jezebel! Thou lying fool—I go!

(She turns swiftly and throws herself over the low parapet of the balcony. Far below is heard the sound of her body striking the rocks, and then the whining snarl of myriad dogs. JEHU *stands as if frozen with horror, and then he turns to* NEBAT.*)*

Jehu.—

Thou fool, begone, and bear her from the dogs.
She, a king's daughter, shall have burial
That well beseems her who was Jezebel.

*(*NEBAT *goes out at right and* JEHU *stands motionless, then takes from the couch her heavy golden scarf, and buries his face in it. He stands thus while the barking and howling of the dogs is renewed with fresh vigor.* NEBAT *re-enters hesitatingly and slowly, and* JEHU *looks up.* NEBAT *throws himself at* JEHU'S *feet.)*

Nebat.—

O Master, we approached to do thy will,
But nought was left of all that thou didst love,
Save some white bones that in the vineyard lie.

*(*JEHU *stands trembling and then, as if to himself.)*

Jehu.—

Was it not thus Elijah prophesied—
White skull, small feet, the palm of that fine hand,
Yonder they lie in Naboth's vineyard land—
And thus it is Queen Jezebel hath died.

CURTAIN

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